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Man charged in naked woman's fall

CRIME A man has been charged after a naked woman fell from a third-floor balcony Wednesday night.

Investigative work by detectives resulted in the arrest of Ron Coughlin, 23, who was allegedly in the third-floor apartment on 177 Street and 81 Avenue with the 19-year-old woman before she plunged to the ground below.

It was initially thought the woman was un-injured. Further examination determined that she had serious injuries, including broken bones.

Coughlin has been charged with unlawful confinement, aggravated assault, causing a child to be in need of protection and breach of undertaking.

METRO EDMONTON

Sports pg 18



Alberta's Heil nabs silver

Movies pg 24

Actors bogged down in Seven Pounds



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Gary Hunt, father of slain teen Joshua Hunt, consoles a family member outside the courthouse Thursday, after learning that the now-19-year-old accused of murdering his son was acquitted.

Teen boy killed in self-defence: Judge

Boy's mother taken away in ambulance after acquittal

VICTORIA HANDSIDES
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The anguished screams of Joshua Hunt's mother filled a courtroom Thursday, after a judge ruled the teen who killed her son acted in self-defence.

"He took his life. He's not here anymore. That doesn't make sense," Joshua's mother, Julie Hunt, said outside court. She was later sedated and taken from the courthouse by ambulance. The boy's father, Gary

Hunt, also lashed out, shouting at the family of the accused.

The accused, who was 17 at the time and cannot be named, was rushed from the courtroom for his protection after the verdict was read.

In his reasoning for acquitting the teen of a second-degree murder charge, Justice Terry Clackson found the accused was protecting himself when Hunt, also 17, was stabbed in the heart on Oct. 14, 2006.

"I have no doubt the residents of the house felt themselves under attack."

Justice Terry Clackson

According to reports, the accused came home to find a party in full swing and threatened Hunt. Hunt, who was unarmed, and a friend then punched and kicked the accused.

"The accused was frantic

... I have no doubt the residents of the house felt themselves under attack," Clackson said.

Gary Hunt said though he and his family are disgusted, they are not surprised with the verdict, and the family will seek an appeal. The Hunt family is also considering moving from Edmonton, fearing their remaining sons will be targeted.

"At the end of the day, him and his family will face God," Gary Hunt said about the accused.

City puts residents to the math test

JEFF CUMMINGS
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ASSESSMENTS When Edmonton homeowners get their property assessments after Jan. 2, they will have to do some major number-crunching to figure out how much they have to pay in taxes, the city warns.

Rod Rosling, a branch manager for the city's assessment and taxation department, says the assessments will go out early in the

new year to give homeowners time to budget for their 2009 city taxes. It's the first time the city has ever mailed the assessments this early and it will be separate from tax notices.

Rosling says homes have decreased in value in 2008 by an average of 10 per cent. If residents find their homes decrease more than the 10 per cent average, they'll pay less.

If homes have fallen less than 10 per cent, however, homeowners can expect an increase, said Rosling during a news conference.

"Your property's value relative to all other Edmonton households determines your share of the city's property taxes," said Rosling.

Bills, bills

- Homeowners will have to shell out more money in utility bills this year as garbage collection is now included as a utility.



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WEST EDMONTON MALL

Drivers who zip past traffic lights with equipped cameras can expect some tickets in the mail after the new year. Alberta's provincial cabinet approved to use the cameras to nab speeders Wednesday. Edmonton currently has 24 red-light cameras at major intersections. **METRO EDMONTON**

Local



Roach infestations back

Officials with Alberta Health Services-Capital Health say more houses and apartments in Edmonton are reporting cockroach infestations. It's a trend that has doubled compared to what they saw last year. "We haven't had any bad roach infestations for about 10 years. It just seems in the past year or so, it's resurfaced," environmental health officer Ken Dong told CBC news.

CBC NEWS ONLINE

News in brief

GUILTY A judge has found a DATS driver guilty of raping a 40-year-old mentally disabled woman. Lyes Kiared, 40, was found guilty of raping a woman on Feb. 13, 2006, that he often picked up on his route. The woman, who was brain-damaged at birth, said Kiared raped her on her couch after checking to make sure nobody else was home. Kiared's story in defence about spilling a semen sample on the woman's couch was brushed off by the judge. Kiared will be sentenced on Jan. 30, 2009.

CHARGES A city bylaw officer has been charged with failing to safely make a left-hand turn Thursday after traffic investigators wrapped up a four-month investigation into the death of a 77-year-old cyclist. The senior was riding his bicycle on a crosswalk on 111 Avenue near Groat Road when he was mowed down by a car Aug. 29. The senior later died in hospital Sept. 2. Francis Grosvenor, 31, is expected to make his first appearance in an Edmonton courtroom Feb. 4.

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Activists continue calls to send Lucy to warmer climes

VICTORIA HANDSIDES
victoria.handseysides@metronews.ca

Determined animal-rights activists marched up to the mayor's office Thursday to hand over a tool in their fight to send Lucy the elephant to a warmer climate.

Voice For Animals representatives have been fighting to send Lucy to an elephant sanctuary in Hohenwald, Tenn. They feel her medical problems, including an impacted tooth and arthritis, will only get worse the longer she's kept in isolation at the Valley Zoo.

"I'm ready to do anything to get Lucy out of the zoo," said Val Robertson, who donned a Lou-Lou the Elephant costume. "We know she is loved by the staff at the zoo — everyone loves an elephant, but it's just not right for her to be there anymore."

In the fall, Elephant Sanctuary executive director Carole Buckley offered to fly a team of elephant specialists from Tennessee to Edmonton to examine Lucy, free of charge.



Val Robertson, dressed in an elephant mascot suit, tries to raise support for the cause of getting Lucy, the Valley Zoo's elephant, moved to a sanctuary. Robertson and others gathered outside city hall Thursday afternoon and delivered information packages to the mayor's office.

Zoo officials denied the request upon recommendation of in-house veterinarians, who feel Lucy's too sick to relocate to Tennessee.

"I think Lucy is a cash-cow for the zoo," Robertson said. "She paints pictures, and some well-meaning people

buy her pictures and donate money to the zoo."

Activists handed out DVDs created to push councillors toward supporting the proposed move, though no members of council were available to receive them.

Mayor Stephen Mandel

was also not available, as he's away on vacation.

Office staff took the materials and thanked the group for their time.

In April, activists handed out elephant "cookies" made out of elephant droppings to councillors.

Smoke, fog contribute to chain-reaction crash near Vegreville

ACCIDENT Heavy smoke from a nearby farm combined with thick fog is believed to be a factor behind a series of collisions involving five semi-tractor trucks and five cars just east of Vegreville, RCMP say.

Mounties say 12 people suffered injuries, one critical, in the massive wreck on Highway 16, near the Highway 36 intersection

after the two chain-reaction collisions occurred sometime around 7:30 a.m.

Vegreville RCMP Sgt. Mike Proctor believes a farmer nearby was burning windrows sometime before the collision.

"It's was just like the perfect storm," said Proctor. "You got the cold weather that moved in with the ice fog, and with

the smoke mixed with it, it all just settled right there."

When Mounties responded to the wreck, Proctor says they experienced difficulty in locating all of the vehicles because of "extremely limited visibility."

Police closed the stretch of road for two hours near the intersection as they investigated the large wreck.

JEFF CUMMINGS/METRO EDMONTON

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Vancouver police go undercover as seniors to catch violent thieves at metronews.ca/canada

Analysis Politics 2008: From one "dys-functional" parliament to another at metronews.ca/canada

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West Edmonton Mall is expecting more than 150,000 people over the next week, all searching for that final gift for loved ones this holiday season.

Last-minute dash begins

It was the weekend before Christmas, and all through Canada's largest mall, shoppers will be stirring, while retailers say they will have a ball.

With one week left to go until Christmas, retailers at West Edmonton Mall and other businesses across the city are gearing up for a mad dash of customers this weekend who are hoping to fill extra

spaces underneath their Christmas trees.

More than 150,000 people come through the doors annually at the mall during the last week of Christmas, according to West Edmonton Mall.

But the trick to avoid the rush this year, says WEM spokesman John Chwyl, is to come early and go online to chart out a map on where to shop before shop-

pers make the trip.

"If you get into the stores a little bit earlier in the morning, you're going to beat the people who are a little bit weary and tired, those who are sleeping in," said Chwyl.

JEFF CUMMINGS/
METRO EDMONTON

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Four people died and three were injured in a fire in Nipawin, Sask., on Wednesday night. A six-year-old boy and his twin sister died. A woman, 21, and a man whose age is unknown also perished. A woman, 30, was rescued from the blaze and airlifted to a hospital in Saskatoon. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Canada



Legal battle brewing

The president of AbitibiBowater says the Montreal-based newsprint giant will fight to protect its interests in central Newfoundland, following the provincial government's decision to expropriate timber and hydro resources. Premier Danny Williams, left, said Bill 75, which was passed quickly this week in the house of assembly, was a necessary move to safeguard the province's natural resources.

CBC NEWS ONLINE

Quebec **Gender equality**



Quebec Premier Jean Charest, centre, stands up after posing with his new cabinet at the National Assembly in Quebec City on Thursday. Half of the 26 cabinet ministers are women.

CSIS listening in

Spy agency monitored calls between suspects and lawyers

Canada's spy service has been listening to telephone conversations between terrorism suspects and their lawyers for the past 18 months as part of a strict monitoring program developed by the government.

A federal court justice stunned lawyers in a Toronto courtroom Thursday when she revealed that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service had monitored conversations between Egyptian refugee Mohamed Zeki Mahjoub and his lawyers since his release on bail in the spring of 2007.

Mahjoub's lawyers demanded that the monitoring immediately stop, calling the practice a breach of the fundamental right of solicitor-client privilege.

"I feel as though my

"It's done, it's over, it's unfortunate ... But there's nothing we can do to change the past."

Justice Carolyn Layden-Stevenson

house was broken into," said his Toronto lawyer, Barb Jackman, outside the courtroom. "It's incredibly invasive."

Justice Carolyn Layden-Stevenson summoned a conference call in court late Thursday where CSIS lawyer Jim Mathieson agreed the monitoring would stop and that any conversation inadvertently recorded would be erased.

Layden-Stevenson then said she would amend the

order for Mahjoub's bail conditions to explicitly prohibit such recordings.

"It's done, it's over, it's unfortunate ... But there's nothing we can do to change the past."

CSIS was listening to the calls on behalf of the Canadian Border Services Agency, which is responsible for enforcing conditions of Mahjoub's release.

Defence co-counsel Marlys Edwardh said she is now concerned with what will become of all the recorded conversations that were provided to the border agency by the spy service.

"How will they segregate and delete that material in some way that we can be satisfied is actually no longer in their possession?" Edwardh asked outside court.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Maple Leaf settles for \$25M

LISTERIA Maple Leaf Foods Inc. said Thursday it agreed to settle class-action lawsuits related to an outbreak of listeriosis food poisoning caused by contaminated deli meats processed at its Toronto plant.

The settlement, which requires court approvals in Saskatchewan, Quebec and Ontario, is set at \$25 million, but could increase by \$2 million, the company said.

REUTERS

News in brief

ECONOMY Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government plans a series of budget deficits totaling up to \$30 billion as part of a stimulus package aimed at protecting the economy, it was reported Thursday. An unnamed official is quoted as saying cumulative deficits of \$20 billion to \$30 billion would be over an unspecified number of years.

REUTERS



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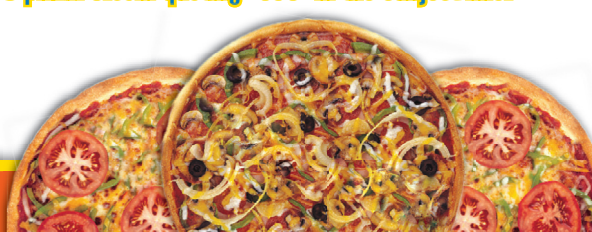
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Ministers reject lifting ban on U.S. poultry

EU farm ministers overwhelmingly rejected a proposal yesterday to lift Europe's 11-year ban on U.S. poultry imports, despite strict conditions designed to ensure consumer safety. A dispute over chlorine-washed chickens has soured the European Union's relations with the United States, its largest trading partner, since the EU embargo was imposed in 1997. **REUTERS**

9

World



Breakfast eaters healthier

Breakfast may be the most important meal of the day — as long as that meal is not a doughnut, according to a new study. In a survey of U.S. adults, researchers found that people who ate lower-calorie foods for breakfast tended to have a better diet overall. Men who ate a healthy breakfast generally weighed less. Among women, breakfast eaters — regardless of the food involved — tended to weigh less. **REUTERS**

Paris Demanding release of political prisoners



Singer Jane Birkin speaks as, left to right, Tina Kieffer, chief editor of French women's magazine Marie-Claire, and French-Algerian director Yamina Benguigui listen at a protest yesterday in Paris demanding the freedom of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners. **REUTERS**

Keep ties with Russia, Bush urges successor

POLITICS Preparing to leave office, U.S. President George W. Bush yesterday advised his successor to try to stay friends with Russia despite disagreements.

"There's common interest and there's going to be a lot of tensions," Bush said at the conservative American Enterprise Institute think tank.

"The president has got to be in a position where he can deal with those tensions in a way that doesn't send chilling signals with other allies."

While not mentioning president-elect Barack Obama directly, Bush has recently emphasized efforts he says his successor

"There's common interest and there's going to be a lot of tensions."

George W. Bush should continue.

Bush famously said after meeting then-president Vladimir Putin in 2001 that he trusted the Russian leader after gaining a "sense of his soul."

Putin, who is now prime minister but still thought to effectively run the country, later clashed with Bush on several issues and took steps U.S. officials saw as counter to democratic reforms. **REUTERS**

U.S. military head briefs Obama on Iraq troop plans

WAR The top U.S. military officer briefed president-elect Barack Obama this week on commanders' plans for troop levels in Iraq, the Pentagon said yesterday.

Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell would not say whether the plans matched Obama's stated desire to get all U.S. combat forces out of Iraq in 16 months, although commanders have previously advocated a cautious approach to troop cuts.

Obama's opposition to the Iraq war was a major part of his campaign, but he has also said he wants a responsible withdrawal and will listen to his commanders' advice. **REUTERS**

India seeks to soothe public with new terror laws

SECURITY The Indian government rushed a new law through parliament yesterday that will let police hold suspects for up to 180 days without being charged.

The law was proposed amid barely contained public anger over last

month's attacks in Mumbai which killed at least 179 people, exposing glaring holes in India's security and intelligence, and which led to the security minister's resignation.

India's lower house of parliament unanimously

the bill, as well as another allowing the police to hold suspects for 180 days without charge and the other to create a national police agency similar to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States. **REUTERS**

Liberals in Russia condemn new laws

Russian liberals have appealed to President Dmitry Medvedev to veto a set of new laws they say could lead to purges reminiscent of the Stalin era.

The government has submitted to parliament, which is dominated by the pro-Kremlin United Russia party, a bill that broadens the interpretation of treason and espionage to include the vague definition of "acts against the constitutional order".

Opponents say this could open the door to arbitrary trials against dissenters at home, whereas the narrower definition was used exclusively to describe co-operation with foreign intelligence services.

"Thanks to these amendments anyone who has drunk coffee with a secretary of a foreign embassy can be nabbed."

Dmitry Oreshkin, independent political analyst

Parliament has also adopted a law under which a single judge rather than a jury will decide in trials of treason, espionage, terrorism, hostage-taking, mutinies, sabotage and civil unrest.

"Jury trials, as a rare element of civil society's control over courts, have been blatantly stolen to favour secret services," leading liberals said in a letter published in the independent Novaya Gazeta paper.

Russian human rights

campaigners accuse former president Vladimir Putin of backtracking on democratic reforms.

"Thanks to these amendments anyone who has drunk coffee with a secretary of a foreign embassy can be nabbed, just like me for talking to you," independent political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin said.

By adopting tougher laws the Kremlin could be seeking to keep a lid on dissent, fearing outbursts of social anger. **REUTERS**

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News in brief

GUANTANAMO The Pentagon is working on a proposal to shut the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, that would be available to president-elect Barack Obama, an official said yesterday. **U.S.**

Defense Secretary Robert Gates asked his staff to come up with a plan to address the issue of how to close the prison in southeast Cuba that Obama has pledged to shutter. **PARMALAT** The founder of Ital-

ian dairy group Parmalat was sentenced to 10 years in jail for market-rigging in a trial on Thursday over the company's 2003 collapse, while all other defendants were acquitted. **REUTERS**

The last statue of former dictator Francisco Franco on public display in mainland Spain was removed from view on Thursday, 33 years after his death began the country's transition to democracy. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed in the three-year-long civil war started by Franco. **REUTERS**

Inquiry backs Georgian prez's attack

SOUTH OSSETIA A Georgian parliamentary inquiry has said the military conduct of its August conflict with Russia was flawed but backed President Mikheil Saakashvili's attack on South Ossetia.

The report echoed domestic criticism of the military performance in the five-day war in which the Russian army drove Georgian security forces from pro-Moscow South Ossetia and advanced to within 45 kilometres of the capital Tbilisi.

But the findings, published on Thursday, supported Saakashvili's decision to launch an air and ground assault on the rebel capital Tskhinvali on Aug. 7 after skirmishes and Georgian accusations of Russian provocation.

Saakashvili has come under fire from Georgia's fractious opposition, which accuses him of walking into a war the former Soviet state could not possibly win. **REUTERS**

UN tribunal aims to find Mladic

SERBIA The UN war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia hopes Bosnian Serb Ratko Mladic can be caught in time to put him on trial with his old political leader Radovan Karadzic, the chief prosecutor said on Thursday.

The tribunal faces an informal deadline to wrap up proceedings by 2012, rising costs, staff departures and two fugitives still on the run, while preparing for the trial next year of its top-ranking detainee, Karadzic, for genocide. **REUTERS**

Iraq deadliest place for journalists

REPORT Iraq remained the deadliest country for journalists in 2008 for the sixth consecutive year with 11 journalists killed, according to an annual analysis by the Committee to Protect Journalists.

All those killed this year were local reporters working for domestic news outlets. That was down from a record 32 deaths in Iraq in each of the prior two years, according to the group. Worldwide, 41 journalists were killed this year in connection to their work, down from 65 deaths last year. **REUTERS**

Illinois won't pay for defence

State does not want taxpayers to foot the bill for Blagojevich's lawyers

The top legal officer in Illinois told Gov. Rod Blagojevich on Thursday the state will not pay for his defence against charges he tried to sell president-elect Barack Obama's vacated U.S. Senate seat.

The Democratic governor had piled up significant legal bills from a five-year federal investigation even before being charged last week that he conspired to bribe and commit fraud in a scheme to swap political favours, including the

Impact on Obama

• The scandal has been a distraction for Obama and his team as he announces cabinet choices and lays out plans for

dealing with the recession and other crises once he becomes president Jan. 20. Obama is not implicated in the case.

choice of Obama's replacement, for cash, jobs or other considerations.

Federal prosecutors may also try to freeze the governor's \$3 million US-plus campaign fund so he cannot use it for his defence,

Blagojevich's lawyer Edward Genson said.

Through his lawyers the two-term governor, 52, has denied any wrongdoing and shown no willingness to resign.

Illinois Attorney General

Lisa Madigan, also a Democrat, issued a letter signed by her chief of staff telling Genson the state will not pay to defend Blagojevich against either the criminal charges or the impeachment inquiry now in its third day in the state legislature.

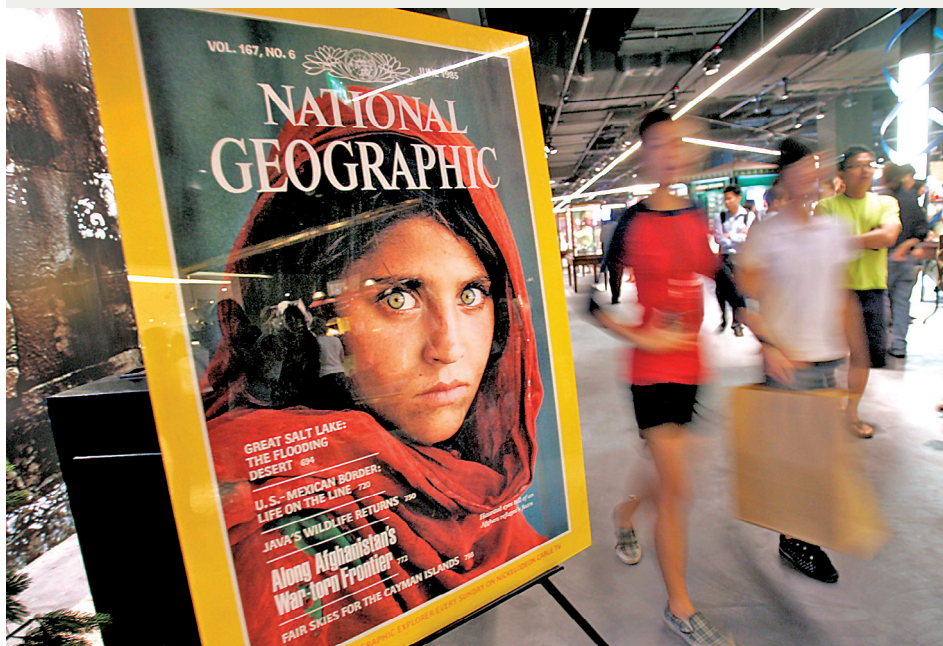
Genson had said the reimbursement was warranted because the charges against the governor and the impeachment probe were triggered by things that happened in the course

of carrying out his official business.

"It is absurd to suggest that taxpayers must finance the defence of a criminal action against Gov. Blagojevich, who is accused of corruptly betraying the public trust for personal and financial gain," the letter said.

Madigan's letter said pay was out of the question for the impeachment inquiry because it is a legislative matter and "not a proceeding against the governor in his official capacity." **REUTERS**

Singapore National Geographic store



Shoppers walk past the National Geographic Asian store at a mall in Singapore on Friday. National Geographic opened its first Asian store in Singapore this week, saying it was drawn to the gateway city to tap growing overseas travel by people in the region.

Saudis, Norway on Clinton donor list

FUNDING The governments of Saudi Arabia and Norway and billionaires Bill Gates and Haim Saban are among the biggest donors to former U.S. president Bill Clinton's foundation, a list released on Thursday showed.

Clinton made public the names of about 200,000 contributors to his foundation since it was formed in 1997, as part of a deal with president-elect Barack Obama to clear the way for his wife Hillary's nomination as secretary of state and to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest.

The two largest donors, each listed as giving more than \$25 million US, were The Children's Investment Fund Foundation, a London-based charity that focuses mostly on children in sub-Saharan Africa and India, and UNITAID, the U.N. drug purchase facility fighting AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.



Bill Clinton

Among 11 donors listed as giving between \$10 million and \$25 million were Saudi Arabia, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, U.S. film and music producer Stephen Bing, the Australian government's overseas aid program AU-
SAID, and the Dominican Republic's government agency to fight AIDS.

Norway, retired Formula One champion Michael Schumacher, media mogul Haim Saban, Dutch charitable lottery National Postcode Loterij and the Los Angeles-based Wasserman Foundation each contributed between \$5million and \$10 million.

The money funded Clinton Foundation initiatives on HIV/AIDS, climate change, a philanthropic summit and the construction of the Clinton Presidential Library in Arkansas.

The list is at www.clintonfoundation.org/contributors. **REUTERS**

UN gives 'devil' life sentence

GENOCIDE Rwandan army colonel Theoneste Bagosora, the architect of the 1994 slaughter of more than 500,000 people and the "devil" that a Canadian general tried in vain to stop, was convicted of genocide Thursday and sentenced to life in prison by a United Nations tribunal.

Bagosora was found guilty of using his position as director of Rwanda's Ministry of Defence to direct Hutu soldiers to kill Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Tribunal

• The Tanzania-based International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was set up by the UN in 1994 to try those responsible for the killings and had its first conviction in 1997. There have been 42 judgments; six have been acquittals. It does not have the power to impose the death sentence.

Bagosora is the titular figure of Shake Hands With the Devil, the chilling 2003 account of the Rwan-

dan genocide by Senator Romeo Dallaire, who was in charge of the failed UN peacekeeping mission when the massacres began.

The court said that Bagosora, who had authority over the Rwandan military, was responsible for the deaths of former Rwandan prime minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and 10 Belgian peacekeepers who tried to protect her as she was killed at the outset of the genocide.

Dallaire was a key prosecution witness in Bagosora's trial. **REUTERS**

News in brief

MIDEAST The door is open for direct talks between Israel and Syria and a peace deal between the two longtime foes is achievable, outgoing Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said on Thursday.

PRISONERS Cuban President Raul Castro proposed Thursday a swap of prisoners with the United States as a goodwill "gesture" to pave the way for talks with incoming U.S. president Barack Obama.

FRAUD The Bernard Madoff scandal has spurred a flurry of court action and investigations as authorities scramble to get to the bottom of the suspected fraud. **REUTERS**

France Christmas party time



France's first lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy attends the traditional Christmas party at the Élysée Palace in Paris on Thursday.

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The UN General Assembly split over the issue of gay rights Thursday after a European-drafted statement calling for decriminalization of homosexuality prompted an Arab-backed one opposing it. **REUTERS**

Life-supporting water discovered on Mars

Mineral evidence for a water environment capable of supporting life has been discovered on Mars, scientists said Thursday.

Deposits of carbonate, formed in neutral or alkaline water, were spotted by NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, the scientists told a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco.

"Obviously this is very exciting," said John Mustard of Brown University in Rhode Island. "It's white — it's a bulbous, crusty material."

Carbonate is formed

"Obviously this is very exciting."

John Mustard

when water and carbon dioxide mix with calcium, iron or magnesium. It dissolves quickly in acid, so its discovery counters the theory that all water on Mars was at one time acidic.

"It would have been a pretty clement, benign environment for early Martian life," said Bethany Ehlmann, a graduate student at Brown University who led the study published in the journal Science.

lished in the journal Science.

"It preserves a record of a particular type of habitat, a neutral to alkaline water environment."

Carbonates on Earth like chalk or limestone sometimes preserve organic material, but scientists have found no such evidence on Mars. The 3.6 billion-year-old carbonate was discovered in bedrock at the edge of a 930-mile-wide crater.

The deposits are about the size of football fields and are visible in images taken by the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. **REUTERS**

Male dinos raised kids, report says

SCIENCE You can call it dino daddy day-care.

Scientists who examined the fossilized remains of three types of medium-sized dinosaurs found with large clutches of eggs have concluded that the males rather than the females seem to have guarded the nests and brooded the eggs.

Writing on Thursday in the journal Science, they said this behavior is seen in certain existing species of birds. Scientists believe birds evolved from small, feathered predatory dinosaurs more than 150 million years ago. **REUTERS**

America not prepared for 'cyberwar': Officials

SIMULATION The United States is unprepared for a major hostile attack against vital computer networks, government and industry officials said Thursday after participating in a two-day "cyberwar" simulation.

The game involved 230 representatives of government defense and security agencies, private compa-

nies and civil groups. It revealed flaws in leadership, planning, communications and other issues, participants said.

The exercise comes almost a year after President George W. Bush launched a cybersecurity initiative which officials said has helped shore up U.S. computer defenses but still falls short. **REUTERS**

Seoul Students at military camp



A middle school student adjusts his steel helmet during a winter military camp for civilians organized by the Marine Corps at a military training field in Gimpo, about 30 kilometres northwest of Seoul, on Friday.

JO YONG-CHAN/REUTERS

News in brief

IRAQ The top U.S. military officer briefed President-elect Barack Obama this week on commanders' plans for troop levels in Iraq, the Pentagon said Thursday. Pentagon press

secretary Geoff Morrell would not say whether the plans matched Obama's stated desire to get all U.S. combat forces out of Iraq in 16 months. **REUTERS**



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Comment

The suburban appeal

OmniVision

Rick McGinnis

rick.mcginis@metronews.ca

Suburbia has been, for three generations at least, the social equivalent of pork rinds or supermarket tabloids — something no one has a good word for, though it continues to exist, even thrive, in spite of blanket condemnation by those who “know better.”

Moviegoers are getting a chance to revisit this spacious, tree-lined hell this Christmas with the release of *Revolutionary Road*, the Oscar favourite that reunites Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio, and allows director Sam Mendes to take another swing at the same target he savaged almost a decade ago with *American Beauty*.

Based on Richard Yates' 1961 novel, it's the story of the Wheelers, Frank and April, who have somehow managed to take up residence in that epicentre of middle-class despair — the post-war, northeastern commuter suburb — while presuming themselves much better than the “hopeless emptiness” they see everywhere. Or not — there wouldn't be much of a story if they didn't realize, with a shock, that they've become trapped in that most awful of mid-century nightmares (in mid-century novels, at least): Material comfort and routine.

Yates' book was one of the first to define the conventional wisdom on suburbs, a viewpoint voiced almost entirely by people who don't live there, and echoed vociferously by the

young people who claim to have “escaped” them — an image that requires us to equate freeways with barbed-wire fences, and malls with guard towers.

In the conventional wisdom, the greatest threat posed by suburbs is that they have the temerity to grow, or ‘sprawl.’

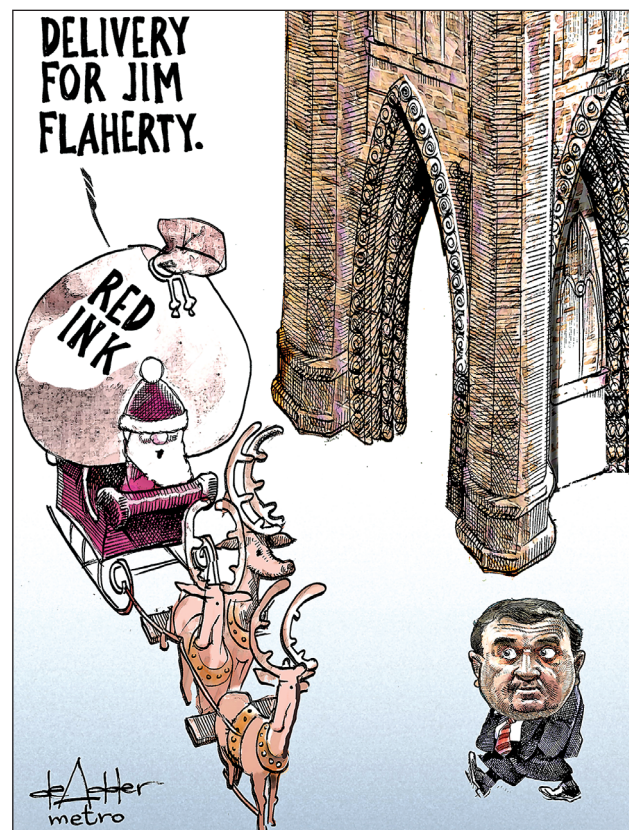
In the conventional wisdom, the greatest threat posed by suburbs is that they have the temerity to grow, or “sprawl,” in urban studies jargon, which sums up the paradox of the suburban problem: That people actually want to live in these terrible places, no matter how many novels, movies, magazine articles or learned studies condemn them.

It requires that we look at suburbs as places that never change, or that their essence is frozen in the mid-century form described by Yates and others — an eternal Levittown, where the saplings never

turn into trees, and no one ever puts a skate ramp in the pool or builds a grow-op in the rec room. It's basically false — the Toronto neighbourhood where I live now is considered urban, but it was a garden suburb when it was developed a century ago, and many of the larger suburbs are transforming themselves into cities, accidentally or on purpose, as population density fulfils its destiny and becomes dense.

In his zeal to reprise his suburb-bashing, Mendes was probably blind to how his tragedy would actually play. Most people will probably watch *Revolutionary Road* and envy Frank and April's cute home with its very collectible period furnishings and the woods across the road and wonder if they could move in tomorrow, hopeless emptiness be damned.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.



Letters

Automakers aren't the only industry in need of aid

I am extremely saddened to see the amount of attention the automotive-industry bailout is getting in the media. It is understandable that most people want to keep the many jobs being held down by those in southern Ontario, yet I rarely see the devastating news of layoffs and mill closures in smaller communities like Kenora, Ont., Dryden, Ont., Thunder Bay, Ont., Terrace Bay, Ont., and Fort Frances, Ont., over the past few years.

For Dryden, a one-industry town, the continued cutting of staff and the permanent shutdown of its paper machine this year leaves many wondering about the stability of the town. Many teenagers who leave to attend college and university never come back, as there are few jobs to be had in their field.

Yes, these towns are considerably smaller than the giant cities in southern Ontario, but deserve just as much attention by our governments and media than they have been receiving.

Perhaps if more was done to create and keep the existing jobs, many wouldn't

be forced to leave and go to other parts of the country to earn their living.

VICKI WALCHUK, TORONTO

Canadian Afghan troops deserve more credit

It would be nice if our Canadian troops in Afghanistan got a little more credit for the hard and dangerous work they are doing.

Since 9-11, it seems Canada is the only country that is taking the job seriously of repairing Afghanistan and rooting out the Taliban and al-Qaida. Yet despite our seven-year effort, nobody on the international stage seems to be giving Canadians any credit for our excellent job in anti-terrorism.

Even with the RCMP preventing the Toronto 18 from conducting its alleged terrorist plans, there seems to be no credit from other nations on how we prevented a terrorist attack from happening in the first place.

I honestly think nations like the United States and Great Britain could learn a thing or two from Canadians on how to handle terrorism.

GEOFFREY DONOVAN STINES, TORONTO

Views

Christmas wish list for City of Edmonton

UrbanCompass

Terence Harding

For many of us, this is a time of giving. We think of the people we care about and select things they either need or will appreciate. Right now I am devoting my time and energy to gifts I would like Santa to give to the City of Edmonton. I'm not sure he will be able to deliver any of them, but, hey, it's the thought that counts.

One of the things I would like Santa to load on his sleigh is a bag of innovative ideas that will actually save

taxpayers dollars. Maybe this doesn't seem like much of a gift, but if you can name three things the city has done in this regard, I will ask Saint Nick to take that gift off my list.

Next, I would like the jolly old soul to provide measurable performance targets to all city departments. Most of us have bosses who expect us to perform at a particular level in order to keep our jobs. I would like to see Santa deliver a big plate of publicly announced targets for the various city departments along with a side order of what will happen to the

management of those departments if those targets aren't met.

I would also like Santa to do away with any user fee that accrues to the average Edmontonian. User fees are one of those ideas that sound great in principle, but end up creating a burden for everyone in practice. User fees are best applied when the service being provided enables the requester to do something for profit. They should not be applied to any service that one would normally think of as one of the reasons people pay civic taxes in the

One of the things I would like Santa to load on his sleigh is a bag of innovative ideas that will actually save taxpayers dollars.

burden for everyone in practice. User fees are best applied when the service being provided enables the requester to do something for profit. They should not be applied to any service that one would normally think of as one of the reasons people pay civic taxes in the

first place.

While Santa is at it, maybe we could ask him to do away with charges for such things as lane upgrading. We would all be much more aware of how much our city is taking from our paycheques if all those fees were just added to our tax bill. Doing so would, of course, make most of us demand to know where all the money is going, so there might not be a place for that kind of gift under the tree.

There's still some shopping days left before Christmas, so if there are other things you would like me to add to my list, please let me know. Merry Christmas.

Terence Harding is a corporate communicator and is a keen observer of all things Edmonton.

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: edmontonletters@metronews.ca

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Chrysler, which is halting factory operations for a month as sales and cash dwindle, will not abandon its involvement in NASCAR racing but will reduce spending by about one-third to put expenses in line with its revenue, the company said Thursday. **REUTERS**

Business

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Boxing Day comes early

As the economic news worsens, Canadian retailers are pushing hard to convince consumers they can get their best deals now instead of waiting until after Christmas.

Several national retailers, including Danier Ltd. and Sears Canada, are using "Boxing Day" in their advertising messages to draw attention to their pre-Christmas deals.

Every luxury chains, like Birks, have resorted to "Buy one, get one 50 per cent off," a strategy normally associated with more mid-market clothing retailers.

As Canadians begin to feel the impact of the U.S. financial crisis, consumers

Spending less

- A survey conducted for Scotiabank in mid-November found Canadians planned to spend just \$790 on average, or 13 per cent less than last year

have becoming increasingly cautious in their spending, Canada's biggest retailer organization noted.

General merchandise stores, food stores and electronics all reported sharply higher sales, while clothing store sales were softer, said Wendy Evans, a principal with Evans & Company, a consulting firm.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Germany Sign of the times



A share trader is pictured behind a mock \$1 U.S. bill and a mock 500 euro note symbolizing a consumer credit note at the German stock exchange. Corporate sentiment deteriorated for the seventh month running in December, raising pressure on the European Central Bank to cut rates further.

Business in brief

ECONOMY U.S. president-elect Barack Obama promised to strengthen financial regulatory agencies and crack down

on runaway "greed and scheming" in an effort to restore stability to a reeling U.S. economic system. **REUTERS**

'Orderly' bankruptcy considered for Detroit

AUTOS The White House said yesterday it is considering the option of an "orderly" bankruptcy as it weighs aid for U.S. automakers and Chrysler prepared to shut down all of its factories for a month.

The move by the Bush administration injected a new note of uncertainty into the politically charged discussions of a bailout for the U.S. automakers that is reaching a conclusion after more than a month of wrangling.

There is an "orderly way to do bankruptcies that provides for more of a soft landing," White House spokeswoman Dana Perino

said. "That would be one of the options. I'm not saying that is necessarily what would be announced."

In a prepackaged or managed bankruptcy, concessions and financing are arranged before a court filing to accelerate and simplify a restructuring.

The news came as Chrysler geared up to shut down all of its 30 factories for a month, starting today, as it struggles to survive a plunge in vehicle demand that has put a massive strain on its liquidity.

Chrysler is generally seen as the weakest of the three Detroit automakers. **REUTERS**

"(A managed bankruptcy) would be one of the options. I'm not saying that is necessarily what would be announced."

Dana Perino

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Burke hurt by non-invite

According to various media reports, Maple Leafs GM Brian Burke was upset he was not invited to Trevor Linden's jersey retirement ceremony Wednesday. Burke was Vancouver Canucks assistant GM when Linden was drafted in 1988, and was GM while Linden played there for several seasons. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Sports



Whitt, Morneau in for WBC

Ernie Whitt, left, will manage Canada's team at next year's World Baseball Classic while star Minnesota Twins first baseman Justin Morneau has been named the squad's first player. The March 5 to 23 World Baseball Classic will be played in several cities around the world, including Toronto. Canada opens play March 7 against the U.S. at Rogers Centre. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Second feels pretty good to Heil

Olympic champion Jennifer Heil returned with a bang, capturing a silver medal at the World Cup freestyle skiing circuit Thursday.

She placed second to U.S.'s Hannah Kearney in the woman's dual moguls. The native from Spruce Grove, Alta., had sat out all of last season to recover from a knee injury and improve her technique.

Heil finished fourth in qualifying and posted victories in her quarter-final and semifinal.

The four-time overall World Cup champion and gold medalist at the 2006 Turin Olympics says she lost against Kearney because she lost control.

Fellow Canadian Pierre-Alexandre Rousseau landed a gold medal, defeating teammate Alexandre Bilo-

deau, who Rousseau says beat him at the Canadian championships last season. Audrey Robichaud of Quebec City was ninth, Stephanie St-Pierre of Victoriaville, Que., 12th, Maxime Dufour-Lapointe of Montreal 13th, Kristi Richards of Summerland, B.C., 16th and Chloe Dufour-Lapointe of Montreal 21st.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Jennifer Heil returned from a season-long hiatus to capture the silver in her return to the World Cup freestyle circuit.

Sundin picks Vancouver

JEFF HODSON
for Metro Canada



Santa Claus, it turns out, is a big fan of the Vancouver Canucks.

And in that spirit of giving, yesterday he plopped a big Swedish present into a pair of hockey socks that had dangled hopefully from Vancouver's collective mantle since July.

Mats Sundin is the newest member of the Vancouver Canucks, General Manager Mike Gillis announced Thursday afternoon. The 37-year-old free agent centre was signed to a one-year, pro-rated \$10-million deal, according to media reports.

"I am truly excited to be joining the Canucks," said Sundin in a statement. "Once I made the decision to return to play a few weeks ago, the Vancouver opportunity was simply the best overall fit."

Sundin, who is at his home in Sweden for Christmas, will be in Vancouver Dec. 27. There is no timeline for him to enter the lineup, Gillis said, and he will be treated like any other player returning from injury or absence.

A number of suitors, including the Montreal Canadiens and New York Rangers, were also seeking Sundin.

Gillis, who met with Sundin on Oct. 30, said he was encouraged by the level of interest the Swede showed in the Canucks.



Mats Sundin

Ferguson fumes over Real Madrid

SOCCER Manchester United hit three goals in an electrifying four-minute spell to beat Japan's Gamba Osaka 5-3 in their Club World Cup semi-final on Thursday.

Victory was overshadowed, though, by fresh speculation in the Spanish media linking winger Cristiano Ronaldo with a move to Real Madrid, reports angrily denied by manager Alex Ferguson.

"Do you think I would get into a contract with them?" Ferguson told reporters.

"I wouldn't sell them a virus. It can be an angry situation and annoying, but we know their game. The best thing for us is to ignore it."

REUTERS

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Boston 8 Toronto 5
Montreal 5 Philadelphia 2
Carolina 2 Florida 1 (OT)
Colorado 2 Tampa Bay 1 (SO)
Detroit 6 San Jose 0
Pittsburgh 6 Atlanta 3
Washington 4 St. Louis 2
Columbus at Dallas
Nashville at Phoenix

Red Wings deep-six the Sharks

NHL ROUNDUP

Ty Conklin made 24 saves for his sixth NHL shutout and Pavel Datsyuk had two goals and two assists to lift the Detroit Red Wings to a 6-0 win over the San Jose Sharks last night.

San Jose has the NHL's best record (25-4-3), but the Sharks lost for the second straight night. They fell at Columbus 2-1 in overtime on Wednesday. The defending Stanley Cup champion Red Wings have the second-best record in the Western Conference (21-6-4). Detroit scored on successive shots in a span of 1:27 late in the first period to take a 2-0 lead after San Jose had carried most of the play to that point.

BRUINS 8, MAPLE LEAFS 5

David Krejci netted his first career hat trick and Phil Kessel continued his amazing points streak with two goals and an assist, as Boston beat Toronto, 8-5, securing its 12th straight home win. Marc Savard added a goal

and three assists for the Bruins, who won for the eighth time in nine games to move their record to 22-5-4, tops in the Eastern Conference.

CANADIENS 5, FLYERS 2

Sergei Kostitsyn, Steve Beghin and Guillaume Latendresse each posted a goal and an assist, as the Montreal Canadiens knocked off the Philadelphia Flyers, 5-2, at the Bell Centre. Alex Kovalev and Matt D'Agostini also lit the lamp for the Canadiens, who snapped a three-game losing streak.

AVALANCHE 2, LIGHTNING 1

Milan Hejduk was awarded the game-winning goal on a controversial call in the shootout, as the Colorado Avalanche edged the Tampa Bay Lightning, 2-1, at the St. Pete Times Forum. Hejduk was the fourth skater in the shootout after the first three were unsuccessful, and veered to the left for a backhand. His shot was stopped by Mike Smith's blocker, but the officials huddled and ruled it a goal.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



The Flyers' Glen Metropolit collides with Canadiens goalie Jaroslav Halak last night. Montreal won 5-2.



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Cincinnati Police arrested Mississippi men's basketball coach Andy Kennedy early Thursday after a cab driver said the coach punched him while calling him "bin Laden" and other racial insults. Kennedy was charged with a first-degree misdemeanor count of assault. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Sports in brief

NHL St. Louis Blues captain Eric Brewer will be out indefinitely with a herniated disc in his back, the team announced Thursday. Brewer will undergo surgery today at Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. The 29-year-old has recorded one goal and five assists in 28 games this season and has not played since Dec. 11 against the Kings.

NFL Minnesota Vikings quarterback Tarvaris Jackson will start Sunday against the Atlanta Falcons in place of Gus Frerotte.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Yanks introduce CC and AJ to N.Y.C.

The New York Yankees introduced a new pair of aces at the top of the rotation on Thursday in free agents CC Sabathia and A.J. Burnett, who they hope will re-arm them for another run at a championship.

Their contracts, worth a combined \$243.5 million US, made the biggest splash at Major League Baseball's recent winter meetings and gave evidence that the new Steinbrenner regime was deter-

mined to launch the new Yankee Stadium with a winner. Sabathia, who signed the richest contract ever for a pitcher at \$161 million for seven years, pondered the Yankees' mammoth offer for a month, leaving many to believe he would instead join a team on the West Coast where he grew up. "The whole time I was trying to make a decision for me and my family," the 28-year-old told reporters, admitting "there was

some attraction" to staying in California.

Burnett, who agreed to a five-year \$82.5-million contract, was 18-10 record last season for the Toronto Blue Jays and said he was confident he had overcome his injury-plagued past. As a young kid growing up in the game, I threw hard and really that's all I did," the fireballing Burnett, 31, said.

"I aired it out between starts. I was proud of what I had and showed it off. I

didn't take care of myself the way I do now."

Cashman said he listened to Johnny Damon, Alex Rodriguez and Derek Jeter, who all lobbied him to obtain Burnett. "His stuff is electric," the general manager said.

Yankee manager Joe Girardi grinned broadly when asked to assess his top starters, including Chien-Ming Wang, who returns after missing most of last season because of injury. **REUTERS**



New Yankee additions A.J. Burnett, left, and CC Sabathia meet the New York media Thursday.

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NFL A Texas farewell



Barring playoff games, the Dallas Cowboys will play their final game at 37-year-old Texas Stadium Saturday night against the Baltimore Ravens. The unique hole in the roof once led former Cowboys linebacker D.D. Lewis to quip, "Texas Stadium has a hole in the roof so God can watch his favourite team."

Jawai cleared to practise for Raptors

There were nights when sleep wouldn't come to Nathan Jawai, nights when he would toss and turn and worry about his future and his health.

That's what happens when a seemingly healthy 22-year-old is told there are issues with his heart, issues big enough that he couldn't do the one thing he loves most, issues seri-

ous enough that he had to halt all physical activity.

But as he stood next to the doorway of the Air Canada Centre practice gym yesterday in Toronto, perspiration dripping off him after a nice time on the treadmill and even greater time on the basketball court, those sleepless nights were the furthest thing from his mind.

"No stress, no sleepless nights any more," the Raptors rookie said.

Jawai, a 6-10, 280-pound Australian taken 41st overall in last June's NBA draft, has been idle for almost three months now. Doctors found something disturbing with his heart during pre-season testing and shut him down.

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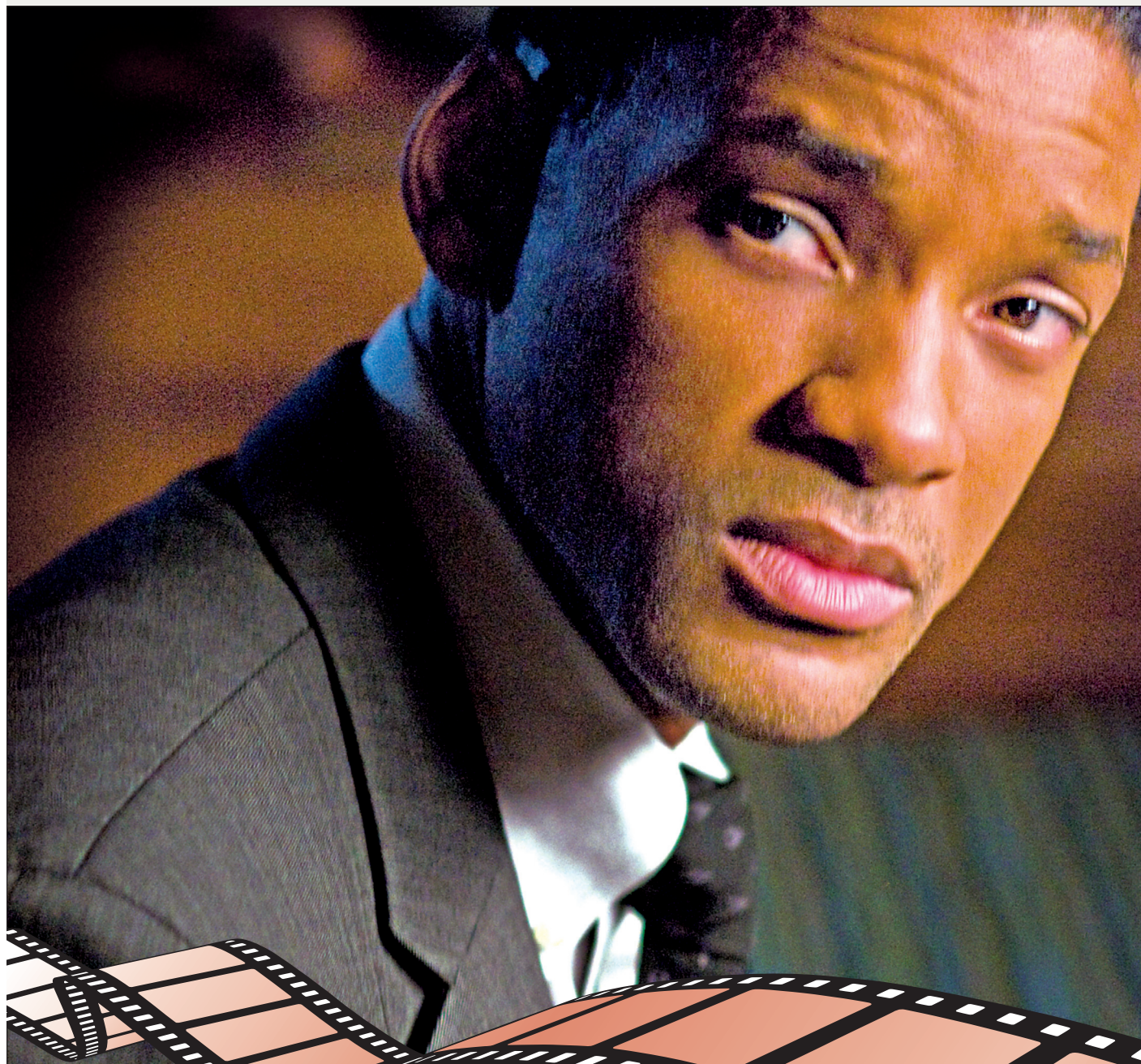
Movies & Entertainment

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

Movies

A new man

Pg 24



Will Smith's character is armed with sunken eyes and a haunted posture — these are the hallmarks of the traumatized man he plays in the new drama *Seven Pounds*. Smith's committed to giving us a 180-degree turn from his usual charming go-getters.

movie

Pg 24



Yes Man shows Carrey back at humble, funny roots.

music

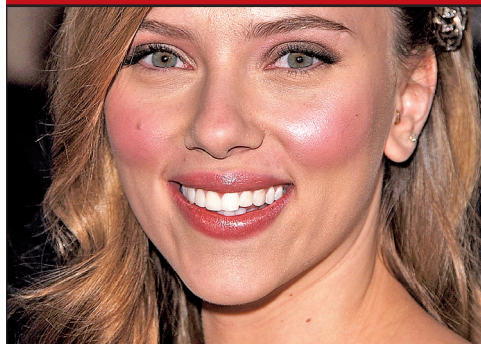
Pg 30



Alan Cross delivers his gift: Part 2 of the holiday playlist.

7th heaven

Pg 32



Scarlett Johansson makes our hot list for this week.

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JIM CARREY
YES MAN

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Movies

●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Seven Pounds weighs on viewers

Seven Pounds

Director: Gabriele Muccino
Stars: Will Smith, Rosario Dawson
Classification: 14A
Rating: ●●●

ROBERT ABELE
for Metro Canada

It's an unusual sight, Will Smith looking uncomfortable in his own skin, armed with sunken eyes and a haunted posture.

These are the hallmarks of the traumatized character he plays in the new drama Seven Pounds — and as committed as the box office star is to giving us a 180-degree turn from his usual charming go-getters, the movie around him is something of an overly manipulative, good-for-you slog.

Smith stars as Ben Thomas, a man in full-on suffering from the emotional after-effects of a traumatic incident, the details of which the movie



Will Smith stars in the drama Seven Pounds.

keeps hidden till the end, but aren't hard to ascertain.

Spurred to seek redemption, he takes it upon himself to intrude upon and help the lives of seven carefully chosen people, including a hospitalized boy, a blind call center worker (Woody Harrelson), and a beautiful cardiac patient (Rosario Dawson).

Dawson's character, an artisan typesetter with a bum heart and financial problems, naturally becomes the unsuspecting catalyst to Ben's accepting love in his austere determined life.

Rather than lay all their cards on the table as to what Ben is up to, screenwriter Grant Nieporte and director Gabriele Muccino

traffic in ersatz suspense, keeping the nature of Ben's sacrificial charity mission secret so that the love story carries maximum tearjerk power when it reaches its twist ending.

It's an audience game that diverts our energies away from the human emotions, though.

And unfortunately, the big reveal is no surprise, and even comes off as faintly ludicrous and bizarre, something for an episode of Ripley's Believe It or Not rather than a touching drama of two souls — each with a different version of a broken heart — finding each other.

It's all especially dispiriting considering how well Smith and director Muccino worked on their previous collaboration, the emotionally tense and genuinely uplifting The Pursuit of Happyness. Smith and Dawson are fine actors, but they're trapped in a movie in which they're more pawns than people.

Doubt leads SAG nominations

AWARDS Film drama Doubt led all nominees for Screen Actors Guild awards yesterday with five nominations overall, including for best ensemble cast, even as talk of a possible strike cast a cloud over the awards.

Joining Doubt, about a Catholic priest and nun engaged in a battle of wits over charges of sexual abuse, in the race for best ensemble cast were Milk, about slain gay rights leader Harvey Milk, and The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, which tells of a man who ages backward. Those movies each earned three SAG award nods.

Slumdog Millionaire, a tale of romance and money set in India, and Frost/Nixon, which recounts the interviews of disgraced former U.S. president Richard Nixon by British TV host David Frost, also saw their actors land in the race for best ensemble cast and pulled down two nominations apiece.

REUTERS

SAG nominees

- Actor: Richard Jenkins, The Visitor; Frank Langella, Frost/Nixon; Sean Penn, Milk; Brad Pitt, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button; Mickey Rourke, The Wrestler.
- Actress: Anne Hathaway, Rachel Getting Married; Angelina Jolie, Changeling; Melissa Leo, Frozen River; Meryl Streep, Doubt; Kate Winslet, Revolutionary Road.
- Supporting actor: Josh Brolin, Milk; Robert Downey Jr., Tropic Thunder; Philip Seymour Hoffman, Doubt; Heath Ledger, The Dark Knight; Dev Patel, Slumdog Millionaire.
- Supporting actress: Amy Adams, Doubt; Penelope Cruz, Vicky Cristina Barcelona; Viola Davis, Doubt; Taraji P. Henson, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button; Kate Winslet, The Reader.
- Cast: Doubt, Frost/Nixon, Milk, Slumdog Millionaire, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.
- Stunt ensemble: The Dark Knight, Hellboy II: The Golden Army, Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, Iron Man, Wanted.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

WILL SMITH SEVEN POUNDS

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Carrey agreeable in comedy Yes Man

Yes Man

Director: Peyton Reed
Stars: Jim Carrey, Zooey Deschanel
Classification: PG
Rating: ●●●●

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

REVIEW Jim Carrey has a fatal flaw — his fans aren't sure what to expect from him anymore. After years of exploring slapstick in laughs like Ace Ventura, Carrey has meandered into melodramatic muck like The Majestic and The Number 23 in an effort to be taken seriously.

With Yes Man, it seems Carrey may be heeding his film's own counsel and just enjoying the ride come what may.

It's definitely an approach that works for him — if not entirely for the movie.

Based on a true memoir, Carrey plays a pessimistic bank loan officer who avoids friends to spend evenings alone and basically wallow in his misery.

After being convinced by a self-help guru to "make a covenant" and say yes to everything, he suddenly finds a world of opportunity — for better or worse.

For Carrey the charac-



Jim Carrey's character decides to only say 'yes' in Yes Man.

ter, that means taking up an online mail-order bride, attending a Harry Potter-themed party, plowing back Red Bulls all night and falling for a free-spirited musician (Zooey Deschanel). For Carrey the actor, it means getting to re-explore both his famed physical stuntwork — like slipping on a drink (which actually earned him three broken ribs) and the more subtle side that charmed audiences in films like The Truman Show.

Sometimes it works, sometimes not, but the truth is, this comedy has a lot of heart and in spite of its formulaic conclusion, The film is undeniably the most honest effort we've seen from Carrey in a while. Perhaps this Yes Man has a few tricks up his sleeve yet.

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Classic story becomes a new tail

The Tale of Despereaux

Director: Sam Fell and Robert Stevenhagen

Stars: Matthew Broderick, Emma Watson

Classification: G

Rating: ●●●●

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

The Tale Of Despereaux is a classically told fairy tale that relishes the conventions and limitations of its genre.

The story feels almost old fashioned in the earnestness of its style and message, but in a weird way that's what elevates it over the ever-growing pile of CGI children's films clogging theatres.

This is hardly the most original movie of its kind, but it is oddly refreshing to see a movie like this told without a shred of irony.

Matthew Broderick

lends his instantly recognizable voice to the titular character of Despereaux, a mouse with massive ears and an inflated sense of courage who dreams of adventure and heroism.

While the rest of the mice who live hidden in a medieval castle lead an insular life in fear of humans, Despereaux ventures out of his community to save a dying kingdom. Like I said, pretty standard stuff, but the screenplay by Gary Ross is so tightly constructed and filled with gentle humour that the intended audience won't notice.

It's undoubtedly Ross' contribution that made this potentially clichéd story work. Ross has

made a career out of writing gentle fantasies like Big, Seabiscuit, and Pleasantville that make traditional storytelling, plots, and messages feel alive and new.

His script is brought to life admirably by the directing team of Sam Fell and

Robert Stevenhagen, who use their many years of experience in animation to create a technical marvel that doesn't quite match the triumphs of Pixar, but comes damn close.

As is expected, the voice cast is filled with recognizable actors, but rather than simply casting stars the film uses talented actors like Dustin Hoffman, Emma Watson, and William H. Macy to play characters who are actually suited to their talents.

Make no mistake, this is a very simple movie offering simple pleasures. But in a time when most children's entertainment is struggling to seem cynical, edgy, and hip, The Tale Of Despereaux offers an unexpected breath of fresh air.

Matthew Broderick provides the the voice of Despereaux.



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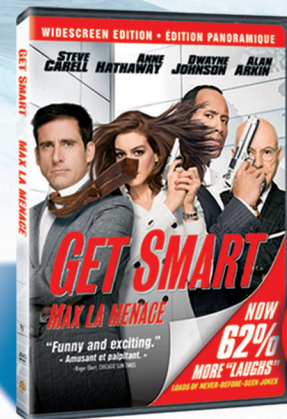
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Delgo tanks at box office

Delgo took home a big prize last weekend. The animated movie voiced by Freddie Prinze Jr., Jennifer Love Hewitt, and Val Kilmer had the poorest opening weekend ever. The movie only made \$511,920 US, according to Box Office Mojo. EONLINE.COM

Reel Time

●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Winslet explores post-war guilt

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada



Based on a simple plot description, *The Reader* sounds like a conventional piece of Hollywood's end-of-the-year awards mongering. After all, it is a tragic love story told over the backdrop of the holocaust.

However, dismissing the movie on this level would do it a disservice. Much like the award-winning Bernhard Schlink novel that it's based on, the film is actually a morally complex story about the challenges that the young people of post-Second World War Germany faced when accepting the atrocities carried out by the previous generation.

The Reader might start as an Autumn/May romance

Movie profile

between Kate Winslet and a young boy, but things change pretty drastically when the boy discovers that Winslet's character was once a guard at a concentration camp.

Dealing with the Holocaust and Germany's post-war guilt without needlessly moralizing or sentimentalizing the subject is no easy task, but director Stephen Daldry (*The Hours*) jumped at the opportunity.

"It was always something that I've wanted to do," says the director. "I hope audiences have as many different reactions as possible. I think it is a complex story and there is a great ambiguity to the book. One of the things we tried very hard to do was to maintain that ambiguity."

Daldry's approach to the material is certainly admirable, but his film never would have worked without a talented actress to take on the lead role of the illiterate, Nazi, cradle-robbler Hannah Smitz. Kate Winslet was a fan of the book and the first choice for the role, but she almost missed out because of a scheduling conflict.

"The novel first came to my attention seven years ago," says Winslet. "I was absolutely gripped, compelled, and ultimately devastated by the novel. I knew that I wanted to do it, but logistics got in the way. The shooting of Revolutionary Road conflicted and we couldn't work it out."

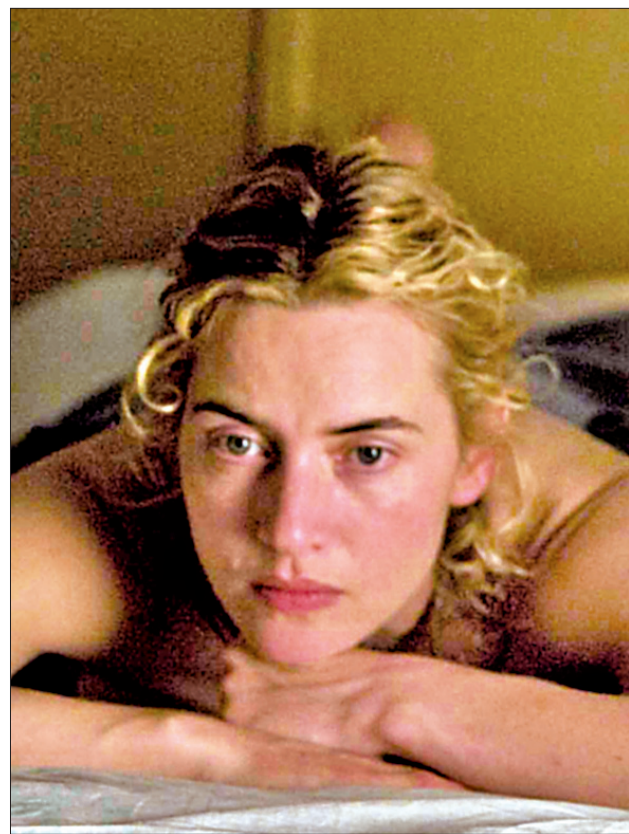
"Then it became Nichole Kidman's role until she became unavailable because of her pregnancy,

the schedule was shifted and the role opened up for me again. I just felt so lucky that happened."

However, despite how much she clearly enjoyed playing the role, even Winslet refuses to forgive the atrocities of her own character.

"My job as the actress is to understand the character and ultimately love them. And I did love Hannah, because I understood her profoundly. Did I sympathize with her? Yes, but that doesn't mean that I sympathize with SS guards in general, not at all. I don't forgive her."

"But that's what I love about the film. It's not a film about forgiveness or reconciliation. It's a story about regret, because you don't choose who you fall in love with."



Kate Winslet stars in the morally complex story *The Reader*.

Doubt a dream for Davis

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada



Viola Davis may get recognized mostly for playing the tiny role of a crack mother in the 2002 drama *Antwone Fisher*, but that's about to change — even if it's not for a boost in screen time.

With one lengthy, powerful scene in the upcoming drama *Doubt*, Davis isn't just holding her own opposite Meryl Streep, she's winning the hearts of moviegoers and critics.

Another modest part for the 43-year-old actress, it's already garnered her an award from the National Board of Review and some very juicy Oscar buzz.

"It's impossible to ignore, but it's almost impossible to embrace also," Davis said over the phone from Manhattan.

"I'm the actor who gets the call from their agent, I go to the audition, I hope I get the job ... I'm the working actor, so the Oscar talk, the National Board of Review, I can't grasp it."

It's certainly not an accolade that's undeserved. In *Doubt* — it opens tomorrow — Davis plays the mother of a child suspected of being victimized by a Catholic priest in 1960s New York.

When confronted by the alarmed school principal (Streep), Davis introduces a startling perspective. It's a rich, revelatory scene



Viola Davis appears in the drama *Doubt*.

"I'm a neurotic actor, are you kidding me? I'm a theatre geek, I work on neuroses."

Actress Viola Davis

that has been described as the "crucible of the story."

Not lost on Davis, she developed her own 50-page biography of the character before filming began.

"I'm a neurotic actor, are you kidding me? I'm a theatre geek, I work on neuroses," Davis said.

"It's one thing if you have several scenes, you

have an opportunity to show and play different aspects of a character's life and that can inform your performance in fantastic ways.

"But when you only have one scene and you're coming into that scene, you're bringing a whole life into that scene with you."

Besides, when you're working opposite one of the silver screen's legends, you certainly want to have your act together. For Davis, starring with Streep was perhaps the biggest dream come true. "(It feels like) a big tornado hit just like in the *Wizard of Oz*," Davis said proudly.

Writer pleased *Valkyrie* found its wings

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada



FEATURE Christopher McQuarrie is as shocked as anyone that *Valkyrie* found its wings. In fact, the award-winning filmmaker — mostly regarded for writing *The Usual Suspects* — never even expected his latest movie to get off the ground.

"Scripts like this, I write them and put them in a drawer," admitted McQuarrie — who also co-produced *Valkyrie* — during a recent phone interview.

The true story of an inside assassination plot against Adolf Hitler in 1944, *Valkyrie* is definitely the sort of film Hollywood generally shuns like the plague. So what inspired the scribe to script a story he assumed wasn't sellable?

"The thing that really amazed me was that the assassination itself was not the end of the story," said McQuarrie. "Once you've killed Hitler, you've only just started and now what you have to do is take over his government."

It's just that complexity behind the plot that intrigued McQuarrie. "The challenge of history is not how it ends, it's how to give that ending meaning...what these men did and the sacrifices they made ultimately brings this movie to what I feel is a really satisfying conclusion."

Lucky for McQuarrie,



Tom Cruise stars in the Second World War-set *Valkyrie*.

his *Usual Suspects* director Bryan Singer (who also helmed *X-Men* and *Superman Returns*) shared that sentiment.

After all, it was Singer that became the driving force in getting the subversive script out of the drawer and in front of financiers. With such a hitmaker as Singer behind it, *Valkyrie* "went from a script that nobody wanted to read to a script that no one needed to read."

Throw in Tom Cruise — who plays Stauffenberg, the fascinating mind be-

hind the assassination plot — and there was no looking back for McQuarrie and *Valkyrie*.

"I knew, having met with Tom, that he was going to look at the script and see it for what it was, not for what he was going to turn it into," admitted McQuarrie, adding that he was impressed by Cruise's fearless dedication throughout.

"No matter how big the movie got, he never did anything to attempt to change its soul."

Valkyrie opens Christmas Day across Canada.

Where there's a Will

InFocus

Richard Crouse

mrchaos33@hotmail.com

Will Smith is the world's biggest movie star: Nobody can touch him. Cruise jumped on the couch, Clooney's movies don't make any money and Hanks appears to be in semi-retirement. Only Johnny Depp comes close and he is a distant second.

Last year, Big Willie took home \$80 million US and became the first actor to have eight consecutive movies break the \$100-million mark at the box office. But despite all that success, a couple of key qualifiers have eluded his grasp.

His home is probably beautiful, but no movie star abode is complete without an Oscar or Golden Globe on the mantle. Cruise has three Globes, Clooney an Oscar and Tom Hanks could start a petting zoo with all his Academy Awards.

Smith has none, but it's not for lack of trying.

He's best known for playing cops and agents,



Will Smith

but in his first big-screen role, Six Degrees of Separation, he played a gay con man who claims to be the son of Sidney Poitier. The movie earned an Oscar nod for co-star Stockard Channing, but nothing for Will's risky performance.

He says that movie taught him to be totally committed to his roles, adding that he now regrets taking Denzel Washington's advice not to kiss a man onscreen.

"It was very immature on my part," he says. "I was thinking, 'What are my friends in Philly going to think about this?' This was a valuable lesson for me. Either you do it, or you don't."

In subsequent films, the ones that made him a star, he developed the tools that came to define his on-screen persona: The cocky tilt of the head and hipster charm. Those tricks won

over audiences but don't win awards.

Then along came a pair of films that put him on the serious-actor grid, The Legend of Bagger Vance and Ali. Bagger Vance earned poor reviews and even worse box office, but the Michael Mann film about the legendary fighter gave Smith his first Oscar bait lead role.

For the next few years, he seemed content to rule the box office, but two collaborations with Italian director Gabriele Muccino — The Pursuit of Happyness and Seven Pounds (in theatres today) — have brought him closer to the award's circle.

"Gabriele Muccino," Smith says, "is able to help me create characters that are much different from what I would do on my own."

Pundits called their first collaboration Pursuit of an Oscar Nomination, and you can almost sense him groping for the award in Seven Pounds, but I fear he doesn't stand a chance this year against Sean Penn, Mickey Rourke and Frank Langella.

He may just have to settle for world domination and leave the awards for the poor folks.

Richard Crouse is the author of Son of the 100 Best Movies You've Never Seen and film critic for CTV's Canada AM.

Synecdoche, New York gets lost

Synecdoche, New York

Director: Charlie Kaufman

Stars: Philip Seymour Hoffman, Catherine Keener

Classification: 14A

Rating: ⓈⓈ½

KEVIN COURRIER
for Metro Canada



Philip Seymour Hoffman stars in Synecdoche, New York.

REVIEW In Synecdoche, New York, screenwriter Charlie Kaufman (Being John Malkovich, Adaptation, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind), whose specialty is abstract absurdism, makes his directing debut trying to blur the line between art and life.

He blurs more than he clarifies, but the picture is still a fascinating failure.

Playwright Caden Cotard (Philip Seymour Hoffman) works for a regional theatre company in Schenectady, N.Y.

Meanwhile, his marriage to Adele (Catherine Keener) is falling apart — simultaneous to his production of Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman.

In response to the heated crisis on the home front, Cotard mounts an epic theatrical construct — a synecdoche of his life — where every character and place he conceives symbolizes his entire being.

For about the first half hour, Kaufman is able to

comically capture the psychological crackup of those obsessed artists who fear that if their art isn't going smoothly, then their life must also be heading for the gutter.

But when Caden attempts to resolve his neurosis through this burgeoning dramatic construct — where city blocks seem to contain every facet of his life — Kaufman's idea quickly runs out of steam.

Initially the performers,

Hoffman, Keener, Sadie Goldstein (as their precocious daughter, Olive), and Samantha Morton (as one of his lovers) help anchor the story by illuminating how life's follies can't be so easily controlled, or resolved.

But Kaufman becomes self-congratulatory about his conceit and ultimately we get lost in the narrative labyrinth.

Synecdoche, New York inevitably swallows its own tail.

Movie morsels

Australia

ⓈⓈⓈ

REVIEW Australia is a beautifully filmed study of a vast land that — as one character says — has "a strange power." What director Baz Luhrmann should fret over is the drawn-out narrative that plays to melodramatic excess. Set during the outbreak of the Second World War, Australia features Nicole Kidman as Lady Ashley, widow of a mysteriously murdered cattle ranch owner. When confronted by her husband's rival with a takeover bid, Ashley hires a maverick stockman (Hugh Jackman) and joins him on a massive cattle drive across the outback.

Steve Gow/Metro Canada

Beverly Hills Chihuahua

ⓈⓈ

REVIEW These days, it seems Hollywood producers are all wondering the same thing: If my dog could speak, what would it say?

Well, Beverly Hills Chihuahua is the latest talking animal flick to heed that query. Featuring the voices of Drew Barrymore, Andy Garcia and other celebs, Chihuahua is a harmless "tail" about a snooty, rich lapdog that gets lost in Mexico and must journey back to Rodeo Drive.

Steve Gow/Metro Canada

Body of Lies

ⓈⓈⓈ

REVIEW In director Ridley Scott's latest film, CIA field agent Roger Ferris (Leonardo DiCaprio) is not only tracking down an Osama bin Laden-like terrorist leader, but he's doing so under the guidance of stay-at-home chief Ed Hoffman (Russell Crowe). Observing Ferris' moves from the eyes of unmanned spy drones, Hoffman calls the shots over a Bluetooth in America.

Steve Gow/Metro Canada

Bolt

ⓈⓈⓈⓈ

REVIEW Essentially, this tale

about the unyielding loyalty of canines is as charming and heart-tugging as any Disney movie out there. Even better, the film excels in depth and maturity equaling that of Wall-E and Ratatouille. Not surprising since Pixar's brilliant chief John Lasseter is now running Disney's animation department.

Steve Gow/Metro Canada

Burn After Reading

ⓈⓈⓈ

REVIEW Barely a year after Joel and Ethan Coen released one of the finest movies of their career, No Country For Old Men, the auteur siblings have returned. In typical Coen style they made an 180-degree turn, moving from a tightly crafted thriller that ruminates on the nature of violence to a fast-paced farce that plays hatchet murders for slapstick comedy.

Phil Brown/Metro Canada

Four Christmases

ⓈⓈⓈ

REVIEW Vince Vaughn and Reese Witherspoon star as a professional couple who always avoid their families during the holidays. After the film's worst plot contrivance traps them in the country and broadcasts their availability to their kin, the couple embark on their dreaded four Christmases. Sure, this is no future Christmas classic, but it will be a movie that you won't angrily turn off when it starts airing on television during the holidays.

Phil Brown/Metro Canada

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa

ⓈⓈ½

REVIEW If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Yes, it's an archaic, overused adage, but when it comes to Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa, it also applies. The movie isn't without its improvements: It has plenty of jokes and inside-gags for the adults but they're mostly just recycled sensibilities from the 2005 film. Of course, the story is what really

counts, and Madagascar 2 tells too many tales.

Steve Gow/Metro Canada

Quantum of Solace

ⓈⓈⓈ

REVIEW The movie starts literally minutes after its predecessor, Casino Royale, ended, with a pre-credit car chase that sums up director Marc Forster's brisk approach to the story. Action scenes are the meat of Bond movies. Most of what we see in Quantum of Solace is at least as good as the standards set in previous films; relentless, and more than a bit improbable. Daniel Craig's James Bond is still an excellent incarnation of the character.

Rick McGinnis/Metro Canada

Role Models

ⓈⓈⓈⓈ

REVIEW Without its leading men — one uses the term loosely in this case — Role Models would be just another installment in the

sub-Apatow genre, which is to say a comedy based on character and dialogue and the odd kick in the nuts. Paul Rudd and Seann William Scott are simply the best parts of a great cast that delivers a barrage of laughs.

Rick McGinnis/Metro Canada

Transporter 3

ⓈⓈⓈ½

REVIEW The latest entry in the lucrative but critically maligned franchise, simply called Transporter 3, and once more pits an iron jawed, black belt-sporting driver Frank Martin against a cabal of greasy, well tailored international baddies. While the film boasts the same clunky narrative problems and distractingly dubbed European actors as the first two installments, I'm happy to report that the breathlessly-paced Transporter makes amends by delivering some of the most delirious action set pieces of this or any other year.

Chris Alexander/Metro Canada

Cineplex

Empire

Magic Lantern

Independent

This week's new releases are highlighted in red.

Screen Times

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., DEC. 19 TO THURS., DEC. 25. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

For reviews of *Bedtime Stories*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *The Spirit* and *Valkyrie* pick up the Wed., Dec. 24 issue of *Metro*.

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Australia (PG) DTS Digital Fri-Wed 12:30-3:50-7:10

Bedtime Stories (G) No Passes, Digital Presentation Thu 3:05-7-9:35

Bolt in Disney Digital 3D (G) Digital Presentation Fri-Tue 1:15-3:35-7-9:25 Digital Presentation Wed 1:15-3:35-7

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital Thu 3:40-8

The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) DTS Digital, No Passes Fri-Tue 12:55-3:30-6:50-9:50 DTS Digital, No Passes Wed 12:55-3:30-6:50 DTS Digital Thu 3-6:35-9

Doubt (STC) DTS Digital Thu 3:10-6:55-9:20

Four Christmases (PG) DTS Digital Fri-Tue 12:45-3:25-6:55-9:20 DTS Digital Wed 12:45-3:25-6:55

Quantum of Solace (14A) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 6:35-9:10 DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Tue 12:40-3:15-6:35-9:10 DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 12:40-3:15-6:35

The Reader (18A) DTS Digital Thu 3:15-6:30-9:10

Seven Pounds (14A) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes Fri-Tue 1-3:55-6:40-9:40 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes Wed 1-3:55-6:40 No Passes, DTS Digital Thu 3:50-6:45-9:55

The Tale of Despereaux (G) Stadium Seating Fri-Tue 12:50-3:10-7:15-9:45 Stadium Seating Wed 12:50-3:10-7:15 Stadium Seating, DTS Digital Thu 3:30-7:10-9:30

Twilight (PG) DTS Digital Fri 6:30-9:15 DTS Digital Sat-Tue 12:35-3:20-6:30-9:15 DTS Digital Wed 12:35-3:20-6:30

Valkyrie (PG) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 3:35-6:40-9:40

Yes Man (PG) No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital Fri-Tue 1:10-3:40-6:45-9:30 No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital Wed 1:10-3:40-6:45 No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital Thu 3:20-7:10-9:50

CLAREVIEW 10 CINEMAS

4211 139th Ave., 780-472-7600

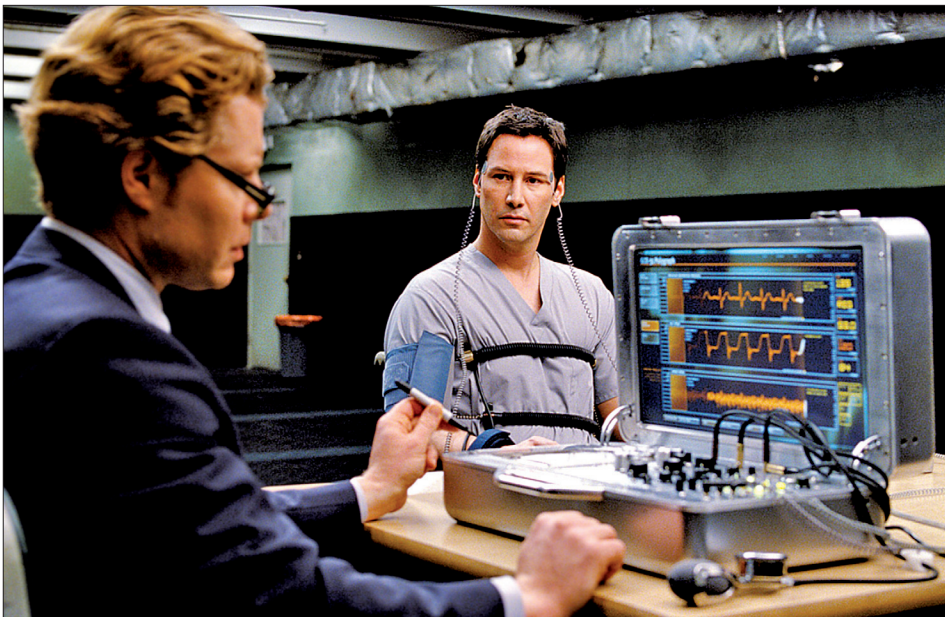
Bedtime Stories (G) Digital Presentation, No Passes Thu 4:25-7-9:30

Bolt in Disney Digital 3D (G) Digital Presentation Fri 4:40-7-9:20 Digital Presentation Sat-Tue 2:10-4:40-7-9:20 Digital Presentation Wed 2:10-4:40-7

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes Thu 4:50-8:30

The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Fri 4:50-7:20-9:50 No Passes Sat-Sun 1:10-4:50-7:20-9:50 Mon-Tue 1:10-4:50-7:20-9:50 Wed 1:10-4:50-7:05 Thu 5-7:25-9:50

Four Christmases (PG) Fri 4:30-7:25-9:35 Sat-Tue 1:25-4:30-7:25-9:35 Wed 1:25-4:30-6:50 Thu 4:30-9:15



Klaatu (Keanu Reeves) prepares to turn the tables on a polygraph operator (David Richmond-Peck) in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, which is currently in theatres.

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Fri 4:15-6:35-8:50 Sat-Tue 2-4:15-6:35-8:50 Wed 2-4:15-6:35

Marley & Me (PG) No Passes Thu 4:10-6:50-9:35

Nothing Like the Holidays (PG) Fri-Tue 9:40

Quantum of Solace (14A) Fri 4:25-6:55-9:15 Sat-Tue 1:35-4:25-6:55-9:15 Wed 1:35-4:25-6:55

Seven Pounds (14A) No Passes Fri 3:50-6:45-9:30 No Passes Sat-Tue 1-3:50-6:45-9:30 No Passes Wed 1-3:50-6:45 No Passes Thu 4-6:40-9:25

The Spirit (14A) Thu 4:40-7:15-9:40

The Tale of Despereaux (G) Fri 4:20-6:40-9 Sat-Tue 1:20-4:20-6:40-9 Wed 1:20-4:20-6:40 Thu 4:20-6:45-9

Transporter 3 (14A) Fri 4:45-7:15 Sat-Tue 1:50-4:45-7:15 Wed 1:50-4:45-7

Twilight (PG) Fri 4:10-6:50-9:25 Sat-Tue 1:30-4:10-6:50-9:25 Wed 1:30-4:10-6:50 Thu 6:30

Valkyrie (PG) Thu 3:50-6:35-9:20

Yes Man (PG) No Passes Fri 4:35-7:10-9:45 No Passes Sat-Tue 1:40-4:35-7:10-9:45 No Passes Wed 1:40-4:35-7:05 No Passes Thu 4:35-7:10-9:45

GARNEAU THEATRE

8712 - 109 St., 780-433-2212

Slumdog Millionaire (14A) Fri 6:50-9:10 Sat-Sun 2-6:50-9:10 Mon-Tue 6:50-9:10

METRO CINEMA

Zeidler Hall, Citadel Theatre Complex, 9828-101 Ave., 780-425-9212, metrocinema.org

Triage: Dr. James Orbinski's Humanitarian Dilemma (14A) Sun 2

Tuya's Marriage (STC) Fri 7 Sat-Mon 7-9

MOVIES 12

5074 130 Ave., 780-472-9779

Appaloosa (14A) Fri-Sat 6:45-9:20-11:50 Sun-Tue 6:45-9:20 Wed 6:45

Beverly Hills Chihuahua (G) Fri-Sat

1:20-2-4-4:45-6:40-7:25-9:10-9:50-11:30 Sun-Tue 1:20-2-4-4:45-6:40-7:25-9:10-9:50 Wed 1:20-2-4-4:45-6:40-7:25 Thu 4-4:45-6:40-7:20-9:10-9:50

Body of Lies (14A) Fri-Sat 1:20-4:10-6:55-9:35-12:10 Sun-Tue 1:20-4:10-6:55-9:35 Wed 1:20-4:10-6:55 Thu 4:10-6:55-9:35

Burn After Reading (14A) Fri-Sat 1:45-4:40-7:15-9:25-11:40 Sun-Tue 1:45-4:40-7:15-9:25 Wed 1:45-4:40-7:15

Changeling (14A) Fri-Tue 1:05-4:05-6:55-9:50 Wed 1:05-4:05-6:55 Thu 4:05-6:55-9:50

The Dark Knight (PG) Fri-Sat 1:10-4:20-7:40-11:20 Sun-Wed 1:10-4:20-7:40 Thu 4:20-7:40

Eagle Eye (14A) Fri-Sat 1:35-4:25-7-9:45-12:10 Sun-Tue 1:35-4:25-7-9:45 Wed 1:35-4:25-7 Thu 4:25-7-9:45

Ghajini (Hindi w/e.s.t.) (STC) Thu 4:35-8:15

High School Musical 3: Senior Year (G) Thu 4:05-4:50-6:45-7:25-9:15-9:55

Igor (PG) Fri-Wed 1:50-4:35

Lakeview Terrace (14A) Fri-Sat 7:20-10:12:20 Sun-Tue 7:20-10 Wed 7:20

Mamma Mia! Fri-Sat 1:40-4:15-7:05-9:35-11:55 Sun-Tue 1:40-4:15-7:05-9:35 Wed 1:40-4:15-7:05 Thu 4:15-7:05-9:35

Max Payne (14A) Fri-Sat 1:55-4:40-7:20-9:55-12:15 Sun-Tue 1:55-4:40-7:20-9:55 Wed 1:55-4:40-7:20 Thu 4:40-7:10-9:40

Passchendaele (14A) Fri-Sat 1:15-4:10-6:50-9:30-12 Sun-Tue 1:15-4:10-6:50-9:30 Wed 1:15-4:10-6:50 Thu 4:30-6:50-9:25

WALL-E (G) Fri-Wed 1:30-4:30

NORTH EDMONTON CINEMAS

14231 137th Ave., 780-732-2236

Australia (PG) Fri-Tue 12:50-4:20-8:30 Wed 2:10-6:20

Bedtime Stories (G) No Passes Thu 5:30-7:50-10:30

Bolt (G) Fri-Wed 1:10-3:40 Thu 4:45-7:15-9:40 Fri-Tue 12-2:30-4:45-7:15-9:45 Wed 12-2:30-4:45-7:15

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes Thu 4:20-8:30

The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Fri-Tue 12:15-1:30-2:40-4-5:10-6:40-7:50-9:20-10:25 No Passes Wed 12:15-1:30-2:40-4-5:10-6:40-7:50 No Passes Thu 3:40-6:40-9:20

Doubt (STC) Thu 3:30-6:30-9

Four Christmases (PG) Fri-Tue 12:40-3-5:20-7:45-10:10 Wed 12:40-3-5:20-7:45 Thu 5:20-7:45-10:10

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Fri-Tue 12:30-2:50-5:05-7:20-9:30 Wed 12:30-2:50-5:05-7:20

Marley & Me (PG) No Passes Thu 4-7:20-10:05

Metropolitan Opera: Thais (STC) Sat 10 **Quantum of Solace** (14A) Fri-Tue 1:40-4:30-6:30-7:30-9-10:15 Wed 1:40-4:30-6:30-7:30 Thu 4:30-7:10-9:50

Role Models (14A) Fri 1:50-4:50-7:25-9:50 Sat 4:50-7:25-9:50 Sun-Tue 1:50-4:50-7:25-9:50 Wed 1:50-4:50-7:25

Seven Pounds (14A) No Passes Fri-Tue 1:20-4:10-7:10-10 No Passes Wed 1:20-4:10-7:10 No Passes Thu 4:10-7:05-10

The Spirit (14A) Thu 5-8:10:40

The Tale of Despereaux (G) No Passes Fri-Tue 12:10-2:20-4:35-7-9:10 No Passes Wed 12:10-2:20-4:35-7 No Passes Thu 4:35-7-9:10

Transporter 3 (14A) Fri-Tue 2-5:30-8-10:30 Wed 2-5:30-8

Twilight (PG) Fri-Tue 1-3:50-6:50-9:40 Wed 1-3:50-6:50 Thu 3:50-6:50-9:30

Valkyrie (PG) Thu 4:40-7:30-10:15

Yes Man (PG) No Passes Fri-Tue 12:20-2:45-5:15-7:40-10:20 No Passes Wed 12:20-2:45-5:15-7:40 No Passes Thu 5:15-7:40-10:20

PRINCESS I & II

10337 Whyte Ave., 780-433-0728

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (PG) Fri 7 Sat-Sun 1-7 Mon-Tue 7

Rachel Getting Married (STC) Fri 9 Sat-Sun 3-9 Mon-Tue 9

Synecdoche, New York (14A) Fri 6:45-9:10 Sat-Sun 2-6:45-9:10 Mon-Tue 6:45-9:10

SCOTIABANK THEATRE WEST MALL

8882 170th St., 780-444-2400

Australia (PG) Fri-Tue 12-4-8 Wed 2-6:30-7:30-10:10

Bedtime Stories (G) No Passes Thu 4:50-7:30-10:10

Bolt (G) Fri-Tue 12:45-3:45-6:45-9:20 Wed 12:45-3:45-6:45 Thu 3:45-6:45-9:20

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes Thu 4-8

The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Fri-Tue 2-5-7:45-10:30 No Passes Wed 2-5-7:45

The Day the Earth Stood Still: The IMAX Experience (PG) No Passes Fri-Tue 1-4-7-9:45 No Passes Wed 1-4-7 No Passes Thu 4-7-9:45

Four Christmases (PG) Fri-Tue 1:30-4:15-6:40-9:15 Wed 1:30-4:15-6:40 Thu 4:15-6:40-9:15

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Fri-Tue 12:30-3:30-6:30-9 Wed 12:30-3:30-6:30

Marley & Me (PG) No Passes Thu 3:30-6:30-9:30

Metropolitan Opera: Thais (STC) Sat 10

Quantum of Solace (14A) Fri-Tue 1:40-4:30-7:30-10:10 Wed 1:40-4:30-7:30 Thu 4:30-7:40-10:30

Role Models (14A) Fri-Tue 1:20-4:20-7:20-10:20 Wed 1:20-4:20-7:20

Seven Pounds (14A) No Passes Fri-Tue 12:50-3:50-6:50-9:50 No Passes Wed 12:50-3:50-6:50 No Passes Thu 3:50-6:50-9:50

The Spirit (14A) Thu 4:25-7:20-10:20

The Tale of Despereaux (G) No Passes Fri-Tue 11:50-2:15-4:40-7:15-9:40 No Passes Wed 11:50-2:15-4:40-7:15 No Passes Thu 4:40-7:15-9:40

Transporter 3 (14A) Fri-Sun 1:10-4:10-7:10-10 Mon 1:10-4:10-10 Tue 1:10-4:10-7:10-10 Wed 1:10-4:10-7:10

Twilight (PG) Fri-Tue 12:40-3:40-6:45-9:45 Wed 12:40-3:40-6:45 Thu 3:40-6:45-9:45

Valkyrie (PG) Thu 4:10-7:10-10

Yes Man (PG) No Passes Fri-Tue 12:10-2:45-5:20-7:50-10:30 No Passes Wed 12:10-2:45-5:20-7:50 No Passes Thu 5:20-7:50-10:30

SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON

1525 99th St., 780-436-8585

Australia (PG) Fri-Tue 2-6:30-10 Wed 2-6:30

Bedtime Stories (G) No Passes Thu 12-2:30-5-7:30-10

Bolt (G) Fri-Wed 1:30-4 Thu 12:10-2:30-4:50-7:20-9:40 Fri-Tue 12:10-2:30-4:50-7:20-9:40 Wed 12:10-2:30-4:50-7:20

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes Thu 12:15-4-8

The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Fri-Tue 12-12:30-3:10-3:30-6:40-7:30-9:10-10:20 No Passes Wed 12-12:30-3:10-3:30-6:40-7:30 No Passes Thu 12:30-3:30-7:30-10:30

Doubt (STC) Thu 1:40-4:15-6:50-9:45

Four Christmases (PG) Fri-Tue 12:10-2:40-5-7:20-9:50 Wed 12:10-2:40-5-7:20 Thu 12:10-2:40-5-7:15-9:50

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Fri-Tue

11:50-2:20-4:30-6:45-9 Wed 11:50-2:20-4:30-6:45

Marley & Me (PG) No Passes Thu 1:15-4:15-7:40-10:30

Metropolitan Opera: Thais (STC) Sat 10

Milk (14A) Fri-Tue 12:40-3:45-6:50-9:50 Wed 12:40-3:45-6:50 Thu 12:40-3:45-6:40-9:50

Punisher: War Zone (18A) Fri-Tue 7:10-9:30 Wed 7:10

Quantum of Solace (14A) Fri-Tue 1-3:50-7-9:40 Wed 1-3:50-7 Thu 1-3:50-6:45-9:40

Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi (Hindi w/e.s.t.) (PG) Fri-Tue 12:15-4-8 Wed 12:15-4 Thu 12:15-4-8

Role Models (14A) Fri 1:45-4:15-6:45-9:15 Sat 4:15-6:45-9:15 Sun-Tue 1:45-4:15-6:45-9:15

Seven Pounds (14A) No Passes Fri-Tue 1:20-4:10-7:10-10 No Passes Wed 1:20-4:10-7 No Passes Thu 1:20-4:10-7-10:10

The Spirit (14A) Thu 1:30-4:7:40-10:30

The Tale of Despereaux (G) No Passes Fri-Tue 12-2:20-4:45-7:10-9:30 No Passes Wed 12-2:20-4:45-7:10-9:30

Transporter 3 (14A) Fri-Tue 1:10-4:20-7:15-10:10 Wed 1:10-4:20-7:15

Twilight (PG) Fri-Tue 1:15-4:40-7:30-10:30 Wed 1:15-4:40-7:30 Thu 1:15-4:40-7:20-10:20

Valkyrie (PG) Thu 12:20-3:10-6:50-9:45

Yes Man (PG) No Passes Fri-Tue 12:50-3:20-7:15-10:30 No Passes Wed 12:50-3:20-7:15 No Passes Thu 12:50-3:20-7:15-10:20

TELUS WORLD OF SCIENCE

Edmonton Space And Science Centre, 1121-142 St., 780-451-3344

The Alps (STC) Fri 4-8 Sat-Tue 4

Dinosaurs Alive! (STC) Fri 1:30

Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk (STC) Fri 11:30-3-7-9 Sat 1-3-5-7-9 Sun-Thu 1-3-5

The IMAX Nutcracker (STC) Sat-Thu 12

Mummies: Secrets of the Pharaohs (STC) Fri 10:30 Sat 2-8 Sun-Thu 2

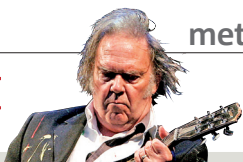
Whales: An Unforgettable Journey (STC) Fri 12:30

WESTMOUNT CENTRE

111 Ave. & Groat Rd., 403-455-8726

The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes, DTS Digital Fri 7:10-9:40 No Passes, DTS Digital Sat-Sun 1:15-3:40-7:10-9:40 DTS Digital Mon-Tue 1:15-3:40-7:10-9:40 DTS Digital Wed 1:15-3:40

Four Christmases (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital Fri 7:20-9:45 Dolby Stereo Digital Sat-Tue 12:55-3:10-7:20-9:45 Dolby Stereo Digital Wed 12:55-3:10



The bestselling albums at Amazon.ca
1. And Winter Came, Enya; **2.** A Winter Symphony, Sarah Brightman; **3.** Sugar Mountain: Live At Canterbury House 1968, Neil Young, left; **4.** Day And Age, The Killers; **5.** Soul, Seal. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Music

Tuning out holiday cheer

These non-traditional songs really should get more play at Christmas

SoundCheck

Alan Cross

alan@ongoinghistory.com

If you're anything like me, you're close to ODing on Christmas music treacle. I tried to get some shopping done the other day, but after hearing Jose Feliciano sing Feliz Navidad yet again, I suddenly realized that I'd rather blowtorch my own toes off than be subjected to more of the same dusty holiday music that's been making the rounds since Coca-Cola invented Santa Claus in the 1920s.

With that in mind, here's another list of decidedly non-traditional holiday songs that really should be more popular:



Bobnoxious do their best to avoid the Christmas spirit with *Police Nabbed My Dad*, sung to the tune of Feliz Navidad.

• **Police Nabbed My Dad/Bobnoxious:** This London, Ont., group have been sending me Christmas songs for the last couple of years and I've loved 'em all. Nothing like a song about your dad being sent to jail set to the tune of the aforementioned Feliz Navidad. Get it at bobnoxious-rock.com.

• **Joseph, Better You Than Me/Killers feat. Elton John:** When I spoke to Brandon

Flowers last month about their third Christmas single, guitarist Dave Keuning was in another suite in Toronto's Pantages hotel laying down the final guitar tracks. Brandon says that Joseph doesn't get the credit he should for his role in the Christmas story and this song attempts to address that. Listen for Neil Tennant of the Pet Shop Boys to sweeten the vocals about halfway

through. Proceeds to Bono's (RED) foundation. Available on: iTunes.

• **Santa Claus Is Coming to Town/BWC Christmas Orchestra:** If you liked Springsteen's take on this one, you might want to stay away from the near death-metal vocals of this version. Available on: BWC Studios Presents: A Very Metal Christmas.

• **Oh Little Town of Bethlehem/Killdozer:** Definitely not the kind of thing you'll want to play when grandma comes over for Christmas dinner. A bit dysfunctional, to put it mildly. Available on: Hardcore Holiday.

• **(We Wish You) A Protein Christmas/The Fall:** I have no idea what Mark E. Smith is going on about, but the mere fact that he wrote a Christmas song is staggering. Not to be mistaken for a hymn, then. Available on: NO HO HO:

I'd rather blowtorch my own toes off than be subjected to more of the same dusty holiday music that's been making the rounds.

Alternative Indie Christmas Anthems, Volume 1.

• **Christmas Is Going to the Dog/Eels:** A deceptively happy sounding song from son of the physicist who invented the Many Worlds Theory.

• **The Cat Carole/Meryn Cadell:** Possibly the sweetest (and saddest!) of all the modern Christmas songs. I tear up just thinking about it. Truly beautiful. Available at: catcarol.com

The Ongoing History of New Music can be heard on stations across Canada. Read more at ongoinghistory.com and exploremusic.com.

Metro recommends

• AMADOU & MARIAM, WELCOME TO MALI:

African couple deftly blends their musical roots with a myriad of modern styles for a superb new and original sounds.



• THE FLAMING LIPS, CHRISTMAS ON MARS:

Film score mixes ominous electronic soundscapes and fanciful strings for a healthy dose of engaging weirdness.



• WE WISH YOU A METAL XMAS AND A HEADBANGING NEW YEAR:

Old-school rockers blast through boring holiday standards with a metal energy that's both ferocious and fun.



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Swift tops the charts

Teen country star Taylor Swift reclaimed her crown on the U.S. pop album charts this week. Swift's second release, *Fearless*, rose one place to the top after selling 249,000 copies during the week ended Dec. 14. **REUTERS**

**Music****Metro recommends**

• **AMADOU & MARIAM, WELCOME TO MALI:**

African couple deftly blends their musical roots with a myriad of modern styles for superb new and original sounds.



• **THE FLAMING LIPS, CHRISTMAS ON MARS:**

Film score mixes ominous electronic soundscapes and fanciful strings for a healthy dose of engaging weirdness.



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Television

Mix of Six

WEEKEND EVENTS AROUND THE CITY

For more events, visit: metronews.ca/entertainment

At the club

Head down to Brixx Bar and Grill (10030 – 102 St.) tonight for an infusion of electronica. Doors open 9 p.m., admission is \$10.

Veggie buffet

A local veggie favourite, Padmanadi Vegetarian Restaurant (10626 – 97 St.) is holding its annual Christmas buffet today. \$15, from noon until 10 p.m.

Caroling

Head down to 118 Avenue for some Christmas caroling tonight at the Carrot Community Arts Centre (9351 – 118 Ave.) at 8 p.m.

Nostalgic fave

The Art of the Brick Lego exhibit comes to Telus World of Science (11211 – 142 St.) starting Saturday. Admission is \$12.95 for a day's admission.

Solstice

A pagan-focused Winter Solstice celebration will be held at City Hall (#1 Sir Winston Churchill Square) on Sunday at 2 p.m.

Dubstep

Head to Level 2 Lounge (11607 – Jasper Ave.) on Sunday at 9 p.m. for Step-pa Sundays, a weekly dubstep night. Admission is \$5 at the door.

Metalocalypse rocks

Intellevision

Rick McGinnis

rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

BRUTAL: I can no longer give a convincing impression of someone whose world has been transformed by Jay Leno on primetime, and there's only so much I can

say about Canadian Idol's yearlong "rest" without bursting into this disturbing giggle, so I thought I'd take a moment to talk about the second season of my favourite show, now on DVD just in time for Christmas.

You don't have to have grown up in a working class suburb in the '70s to love heavy metal, but it certainly helps, and as far as I can tell, metal fans generally love Metalocalypse, even though it viciously satirizes everything they hold dear. If you haven't managed to catch its brief appearances on Teletoon's adult-only Detour programming block, the premise is sim-

ple enough — Dethklok is the biggest band in the world, growing from the 13th to the seventh-largest economy in the world over the course of the show's two seasons. Try to imagine, say, that Slayer or Cannibal Corpse could cause international riots, or prompt debates at the United Nations.

Basically, it's like spending a night in front of an Xbox with a bunch of boys — teenage or older — un-governed by female influences, if only for a few precious hours.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

FRIDAY

ED	C	B	S	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
12/19/08	2	CFRN	239 318	etalk (N)	Hollywood	Rita MacNeil's Christmas		Eight Days to Live (2006, Drama)	Kelly Rowan. (DVS)			News (N)
	3	KHQ	- 370	News (N)	Be-Millionaire	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel-Fortune	Momma's Boys	Dateline NBC			
	4	CBXT	- 307	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	The Secret of the Nutcracker (DVS)		Little Mosque	CBC News: The National			The Hour
	6	KREM	- 372	News (N)	Hollywood	The Doctors (N)		Ghost Whisperer (N)	NUMB3RS "Tabu"			NUMB3RS
	7	CKEM	241 347	Law & Order: SVU	Friends	Friends		Crusoe	Friends	Friends		Your City
	8	CITV	240 339	ET Canada	Entertainment	90210 (HDTV)		NUMB3RS "Frienemies"	Life "Trapdoor" (N)			News Hour
	12	CBXFT	119 705	Antarctique	All together now (N) (SC)			ConcertPop, tout en piano	Le Téléjournal (N) (SC)			T.J Alberta
	13	KXLY	- 371	4 News at 6	4 News at 6:30	Entertainment	The Insider (N)	Wife Swap	Supernanny			20/20
	16	KAYU	- 373	The Simpsons	Raymond	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Smarter Than a 5th Grader?	Don't Forget the Lyrics!			News (N)
	19	CHTV	-	The Insider (N)	E News	Inside Hollywood		Momma's Boys	20/20 (HDTV)			News (N)
news	22	KSPS	- 374	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer		Wash. Week	McLaughlin	Bill Moyers Journal (N)	NOW on PBS	Being Served		Vicar of Dibley
	15	CBCTN	502	CBC News: The National		CBC News: The fifth estate		CBC News: The National	CBC News: The National			fifth estate
sports	54	CTVN	501 391	CTV Newsnet		News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News
	20	TSN	400 400	Junior Hockey	SportsCentre	Curling 2008 Continental Cup -- Men's Team Competition. From Camrose, Alta. (Live)			Sportsnet Con.	Sportsnet Connected		SportsCentre
family	23	net	408 418	NHL Hockey	Chicago Blackhawks at Calgary Flames. (HDTV) (Live)							Ult. Fighter
	47	SPEED	417 406	Unique Whips	Unique Whips	Unique Whips	Dodge Test	Pinks	Pass Time	SEMA Las Vegas: 2008		Unique Whips
cable variety	94	SCORE	410 403	(6) WWE SmackDown!		Score Tonight		Hardcore Hockey Talk		WWE SmackDown!		
	14	YTV	552 543	Powerpuff Girls: Fight		Christmas With the Kranks ** (2004, Comedy)				Smallville "Fracture"		Dark Oracle
cable variety	17	TREE	553 546	Daniel Cook	Miss Spider	Toopy & Binoo	Rolie Polie Olie	Max & Ruby	Dragon	Backyardigans	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!
	45	FAM	557 541	Zoey 101	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	The Christmas Star (1986, Drama)			(10:03) "Twins the Night ** (2001)		
cable variety	25	A&E	615 520	CSI: Miami "Game Over"		CSI: Miami (HDTV)		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		CSI: Miami (HDTV)		CSI: Miami
	29	FOOD	603 561	Chef Abroad	The Wild Chef	Diner, Drive-In	Diner, Drive-In	Ace of Cakes	Ace of Cakes	Challenge		Chef Abroad
cable variety	32	DISC	520 505	Man vs. Wild (N)		Alcatraz: Living Hell		Daily Planet		Man vs. Wild		Tornado Ramp.
	38	SPIKE	628 584	UFC Fight Night						MANswers	MANswers	GameTrailers
cable variety	43	SPACE	627 528	Supernatural		Ghost Hunters		Species III * (2004, Science Fiction)	Sunny Mabrey, Robin Dunne.			
	50	STAR	621 56	Popaganda		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ	etalk	The View (HDTV)		Popaganda

SATURDAY

ED	C	B	S	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
12/20/08	2	CFRN	239 318	Conversation-Prime Minister		Playing House (2006, Romance-Comedy) (DVS)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	3	KHQ	- 370	News (N)	DTV: Ready?	CSI: NY "YoungBlood"		Crusoe (HDTV) (N)		WWE Tribute to the Troops (N)		Law/Ord SVU
	4	CBXT	- 307	NHL Hockey		NHL Hockey Chicago Blackhawks at Vancouver Canucks. (HDTV) (Live)						
	6	KREM	- 372	News (N)	Time Life	Operation Smile Free surgery.		Elf *** (2003, Comedy) Will Ferrell, Bob Newhart.				48 Hr. Mystery
	7	CKEM	241 347	Survivorman (DVS)		Crusoe (HDTV) (N)		Too Cool for Christmas (2004, Comedy-Drama)				The City Show
	8	CITV	240 339	Santa Claus Parade		Doc		Painkiller Jane	Kenny-Spenny	Kenny-Spenny		News (N)
	12	CBXFT	119 705	Les Boys	Les Boys III (2001, Comédie) Marc Messier, Rémy Girard, Patrick Huard. (SC)					Le Téléjournal	Tellement	Patient anglais
	13	KXLY	- 371	4 News at 6	The Insider (N)	Entertainment Tonight		I Want a Dog-Charlie Brown		Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat (2003, Comedy)		
	16	KAYU	- 373	Boston Legal		House		Cops	Cops	America's Most Wanted		News (N)
	19	CHTV	-	E News	The Soup	Behind Scenes	Behind Scenes	Dr. 90210 (N)		Inside Hollywood		E News
news	22	KSPS	- 374	The Lawrence Welk Show		May-December	Time Goes By	(9:05) Annie Hall **** (1977, Comedy)				Faith Hill, Joy
	15	CBCTN	502	Sat. Report	Mansbridge	Christmas Confidential		Sat. Report	Weekend	Sat. Report	Mansbridge	Confidential
sports	54	CTVN	501 391	CTV Newsnet-Scott Laurie		News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News
	20	TSN	400 400	(6) NFL Football Baltimore Ravens at Dallas Cowboys.				Curling 2008 Continental Cup -- 'B' Skins Competition.				
family	23	net	408 418	English Premier League Soccer Teams TBA.				The Ultimate Fighter		Saturday Night Poker		Sportsnet Con.
	47	SPEED	417 406	Pass Time	Pass Time	Pass Time	Pass Time	Pass Time	Pass Time	Pass Time	Pass Time	Pass Time
cable variety	94	SCORE	410 403	NBA Basketball Toronto Raptors at San Antonio Spurs.				BodogFight		Strikeforce		Final Score
	14	YTV	552 543	Red-Nosed Reindeer		The Christmas That Almost Didn't Happen				National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 2: Cousin Eddie		
cable variety	17	TREE	553 546	Blue's Room	Toopy & Binoo	Red-Nosed Reindeer		Toy Castle	Dragon (DVS)	Backyardigans	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!
	45	FAM	557 541	Natural-Sadie	Flight 29 Down	That's-Raven	Zoey 101	Life Derek	Han. Montana	The Man Who Saved Christmas (2002)		
cable variety	25	A&E	615 520	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		The Sopranos (HDTV)		The Sopranos (HDTV)		CSI: Miami (HDTV)		CSI: Miami
	29	FOOD	603 561	Top Chef		Kitchen Nightmares		The F Word		Challenge		Top Chef
cable variety	32	DISC	520 505	Canada's Worst Driver		Criss Angel	Criss Angel	A Haunting		Canada's Worst Driver		Criss Angel
	38	SPIKE	628 584	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		Boyz n the Hood *** (1991, Drama) Larry Fishburne.				CSI: Crime Scn
cable variety	43	SPACE	627 528	Fringe		Sarah Connor Chronicles		Godzilla ** (1998, Science Fiction) Matthew Broderick, Jean Reno.				
	50	STAR	621 56	Staying Young in Hollywood		Britain's Next Top Model		Best Dressed	Fabulous Life	TMZ (N)		Britains

SUNDAY

ID	C	B	S	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
12/21/08	2	CFRN	239 318	Corner Gas	Corner Gas	The Rankin Family Reunion		Would Be Kings (2008, Crime Drama) (DVS)				News (N)
	3	KHQ	- 370	(6:15) NFL Football Carolina Panthers at New York Giants.				Best Sports		Law & Order: SVU		CSI: NY
	4	CBXT	- 307	Mickey-C'mas	Grinch-C'mas	National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (1989, Comedy)				CBC News: Sunday Night (N)		McDermott
	6	KREM	- 372	News (N)		60 Minutes		Million Dollar Password		Cold Case "Wings" (N)		The Unit
	7	CKEM	241 347	Murdoch	2Half Men	According-Jim	According-Jim	According-Jim	According-Jim	Less-Kind	Less-Kind	Reviews
	8	CITV	240 339	16:9 Picture	American Dad	ReGenesis "China"		The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Family Guy	American Dad	News (N)
	12	CBXFT	119 705	Découverte	Et Dieu créa	Le Secret de ma mère (2006) (SC)		Tout le monde		Le Téléjournal	Zone doc (HDTV) (N) (SC)	
	13	KXLY	- 371	News	Storm Stories	Funnies Home Videos		Extreme Makeover: Home		Extreme Makeover: Home		Housewives
	16	KAYU	- 373	House "Daddy's Boy"		To Be Announced		The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Family Guy	American Dad	News (N)
	19	CHTV	-	Greatest Myst.	Greatest Myst.	Extreme Makeover: Home		His and Her Christmas (2005, Comedy-Drama)				FANatical
news	22	KSPS	- 374	Spain ... On the Road Again		Nature (HDTV) (DVS)		Masterpiece Contemporary (DVS)				Mystery!
	15	CBCTN	502	CBC News: Sunday Night (N)		Princesses of the World		Charles Other Mistress		CBC News: Sunday Night		Princesses
sports	54	CTVN	501 391	CTV Newsnet-Scott Laurie		News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News
	20	TSN	400 400	(6:15) NFL Football Carolina Panthers at New York Giants.				SportsCentre				Golf: Chevron World Challenge
family	23	net	408 418	Best Damn Red Bull Air Race		World Combat League		World Combat League		Sportsnet Connected		Poker
	47	SPEED	417 406	Unique Whips	Unique Whips	Unique Whips	Unique Whips	Hot Import	Hot Import	Hot Import	Hot Import	Hot Import
cable variety	94	SCORE	410 403	College Football: New Orleans Bowl -- Southern Mississippi vs. Troy				(9:45) World Cup of Poker		Poker Million Pound Challenge.		
	14	YTV	552 543	Jack Frost ** (1998, Fantasy) Michael Keaton.				SpongeBob	Mystery Hnt.	The Next Star		Falcon Beach
cable variety	17	TREE	553 546	Rolie Polie Olie	Mighty Mach	Frst Snn-Wint	Toy Castle	Tipi Tales	Dragon (DVS)	Backyardigans	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!
	45	FAM	557 541	Natural-Sadie	Flight 29 Down	That's-Raven	Zoey 101	Life Derek	Han. Montana	Jack Frost ** (1998, Fantasy)		
cable variety	25	A&E	615 520	CSI: Miami "Kill Switch"		CSI: Miami "Born to Kill"		CSI: Miami (HDTV)		CSI: Miami "Nailed"		CSI: Miami
	29	FOOD	603 561	Iron Chef America		In Search of Perfection		Unwrapped		12 Days of Cookies		Dinner Imposs.
cable variety	32	DISC	520 505	Dark Fellowships: The Vril (N)		MythBusters		Anthony Bourdain		Secret Plot to Kill Hitler		
	38	SPIKE	628 584	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		MXC	MXC	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		CSI: Crime Scn
cable variety	43	SPACE	627 528	Battlestar Galactica		Torchwood		(9:05) Spawn ** (1997, Fantasy) John Leguizamo, Michael Jai White.				
	50	STAR	621 56	Look-A-Like	Look-A-Like	Girl Next Door	In Fashion	Hollywood Sugar Mamas		Scott Baio Is 45 ... and Single		Girl Next Door

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Leading man Jeremy Piven has suddenly split from the critical and commercial hit Broadway revival of David Mamet's Speed-the-Plow, citing doctors' diagnosis that he's suffering a high mercury count, Variety reports. **PEOPLE.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

Inauguration tops Scarlett's wish list

PEOPLE Scarlett Johansson stopped by The Tonight Show with Jay Leno this week and told Jay what she's asking Santa for this Christmas.

The 24-year-old actress, who is an outspoken Barack Obama supporter, expressed her desire to attend the Inaugural Ball, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

"From Santa I would like a ticket to the Inaugural Ball," she says. "That's what I want Santa."



MSN.COM

'No need for money': Emma

PEOPLE Emma Watson has "no need for money in her life," femalefirst.co.uk is reporting.

The Harry Potter actress — estimated to be worth \$23 million — says, "The wealth side of it hasn't hit me yet because I have no need for money in my life. My life will not be motivated by money."

The 18-year-old also insists she has not adopted a lavish lifestyle, and still uses public transport.

"I have a more normal life than people expect," she told USA Today. "People are like, 'That girl looks like the girl from Harry Potter, but it can't be her on the train.'"



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jolie and Pitt say no to TV

PARENTING When the holiday season rolls around, Brad Pitt says he and Angelina Jolie aren't big spenders for their brood of six, preferring making crafts to giving pricey presents, people.com reports.

With their luxe lifestyle, how do the youngsters avoid craving tons of holiday loot? By nixing TV.

"The kids don't ask for the big gifts for the reason that they don't see a lot of the American cartoon television, which is packed with all those manipulative commercials

for big toys that look so fantastic," says papa Pitt.

"When they do see that stuff is when they start asking for the toys, so we figure if they don't see them, they won't know they're there. So we have

gifts, but we try to keep the money spent to a minimum."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Whitney's stepmom sues over dad's cash

LEGAL Whitney Houston is being sued by her stepmother for allegedly ignoring the wishes of her late father, femalefirst.co.uk is reporting.

In the lawsuit filed in a federal court in Newark, the 45-year-old singer is accused of improperly keeping the proceeds of her dad John

Houston's \$1-million insurance policy. Whitney's stepmother Barbara Houston claims the

money was meant to pay off the \$723,000 mortgage on John's Fort Lee condominium, in New Jersey, where she still lives.

Whitney holds the mortgage on the property. John died from cardiac arrest in 2003, aged 82.

Barbara also claims her late husband wanted the remaining insurance money to go to her.

Lawyers for Whitney and her stepmother declined to comment on the lawsuit.



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jodie's relapse led to custody woes?

PEOPLE A judge made a temporary ruling Wednesday that Jodie Sweetin's custody over eight-month-old daughter Zoie must only be in Sweetin's parents' home (where she currently lives) or in her parents' presence, people.com is reporting.

The judge made his ruling after Sweetin recently underwent an emergency investigation by an Orange County, Calif., family court for allegations of substance abuse raised by her estranged husband.

Her es-

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS



METRO NEWS SERVICES

tranged husband, Cody Herpin, tells People that his "main concern" is to "keep Jodie clean and safe."

Herpin's lawyer, Robert Benavente, tells People the reason for the investigation of Sweetin is "primarily alcohol (abuse) but there's also concern regarding methamphetamines."

"Jodie absolutely has not relapsed into using meth," Sweetin's lawyer Wilma Presley tells People. "She merely confessed to having several glasses of wine over dinner recently and felt guilty about that. She is currently in a 12-step program and is working hard on her sobriety. She wants to be clean and sober from everything."

Depp ready to marry longtime partner?

RELATIONSHIP Johnny Depp has reportedly bought an engagement ring for partner Vanessa Paradis, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

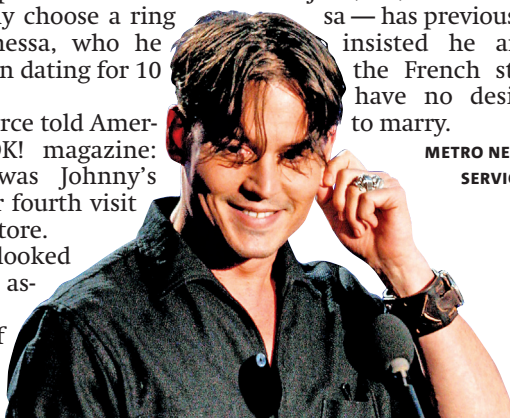
The 45-year-old actor asked a high-end California jewellery store to close to the public so he could privately choose a ring for Vanessa, who he has been dating for 10 years.

A source told America's OK! magazine: "This was Johnny's third or fourth visit to the store."

"He looked at an assortment of classic soli-

taire diamond rings in platinum settings — a really beautiful selection of elegant and understated rings and made a very large purchase."

Johnny — who has two children, Lily Rose, nine and Jack, six, with Vanessa — has previously insisted he and the French star have no desire to marry.



METRO NEWS SERVICES

No more kids, Smith insists

CHILDREN Will Smith doesn't want any more kids, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The 40-year-old actor and wife Jada Pinkett Smith — who raise three children together — are instead looking forward to becoming grandparents.

Will said: "Jada and I sat down and asked, 'Where do we see ourselves (in 40 years)?' ...

We don't have more children — we have grandchildren."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Moss making sexy lingerie

CAREER Kate Moss is set to design and model a range of sexy lingerie, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The British beauty has extended her contract with U.K. high street fashion chain Topshop for another three years and can't wait to start work on the new lines — which also includes a range of shoes — due in March.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Taylor talks after tooth surgery

PEOPLE It takes more than having her wisdom teeth removed to keep down Taylor Swift, people.com reports.

The singer has been blogging through the pain, keeping fans posted on her recovery.

And the pain? "I'm feeling it," she wrote.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



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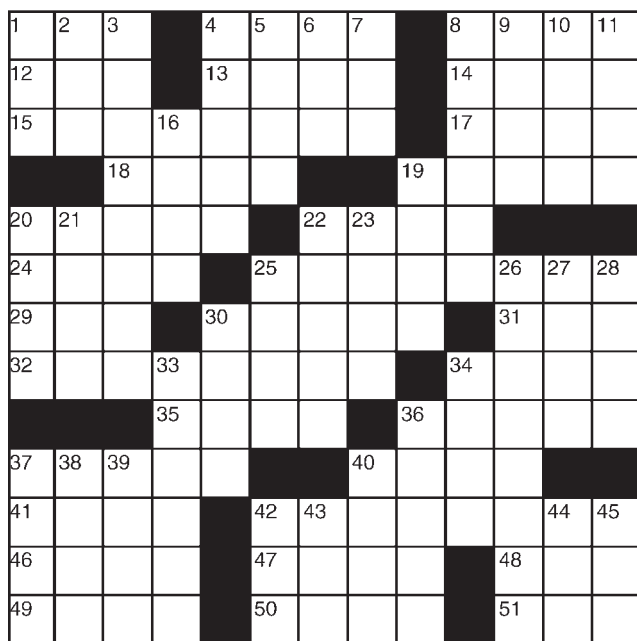
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STORE HOURS 26 9:30-5, 27 10-5, 28 12-5, 29 10-6, 30 10-6, 31 10-5

**Today**Mostly Cloudy
-22 °C / -26 °C**Saturday**Fog, frigid
-22 °C / -31 °C**Sunday**Afternoon clouds
-21 °C / -30 °C**Michele McDougall, Weather Specialist & Host – Breakfast Television**

"My favourite part is reporting the weather. It fascinates me, and as we know around here, it's always changing, keeping forecasters on their toes."

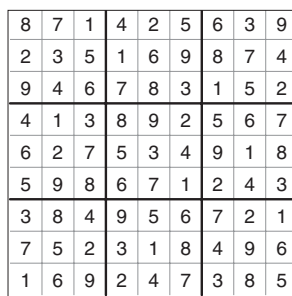
WEEKDAYS AT 6 AM

**Take Five****Crossword across**

- 1 Spasm
4 Greenish-blue
8 — Bader Ginsburg
12 Historic time
13 Mandlikova of tennis
14 Birthright barterer
15 Gilligan, notably
17 Immediately upcoming
18 Veer
19 Bullwinkle's foe
20 Emulate da Vinci
22 Sketch
24 Shrek is one
25 Us
29 25-Across, e.g.
30 Corridors
- 31 Lubricant
32 Courtroom punishment
34 They give a hoot
35 Forest trek
36 Breathlessness?
37 Bottom point
40 Detail, for short
41 Out of the storm
42 Unable to show versatility
46 Czech or Pole
47 Session with a shrink
48 Vast expanse
49 Stevenson villain
50 Make — meet
51 X rating?

Crossword down

- 1 Sleuth, for short
2 A Gershwin brother
3 Rigid
4 Graph
5 Exhibit ennui
6 Literary collection
7 Aye undoer
8 Fame
9 Addict
10 Urban transport
11 Shacks
16 Melody
19 Ovine vocabulary
20 Spacecraft compartments
21 Chills and fever
22 "La — Vita"
23 Legislation
- 25 Tug hard
26 Sad
27 Marathon fraction
28 "Born Free" lioness
30 Estate recipient
33 Rob
34 Mostly Mideastern cartel
36 Mimics
37 Doggerel Ogden
38 Partner in crime
39 Out of play
40 Tater
42 Commonest English word
43 Thither
44 Witness
45 Erstwhile M&M's hue

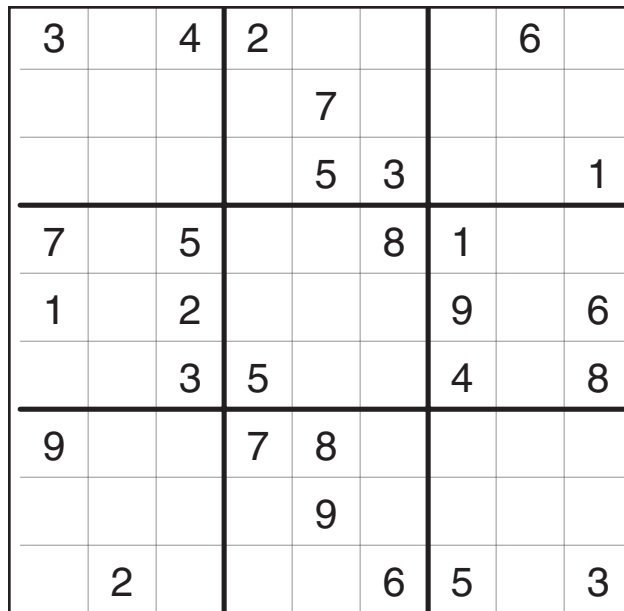
PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:**Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca****SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:**

Under 13 min Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar

17-21 min Smart
21-25 min Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

**Halibut Steaks with Tomato and Bell Pepper Salsa****INGREDIENTS:**

4 halibut steaks, about 5 ounces each
4 tbsp (60 mL) extra-virgin olive oil
Fresh juice of 1 small orange
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 orange, cut into wedges, to garnish
Tomato and Bell Pepper Salsa
2 medium plum tomatoes, seeded and diced
1/2 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
1/2 red onion, finely chopped
Fresh juice of 1 small orange
1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped fresh basil
1 tbsp (15 mL) balsamic vinegar
1 tsp (5 mL) sugar
Salt and fresh-ground pepper

METHOD:

1. Place halibut steaks in shallow glass bowl. Mix together oil, orange juice, garlic, salt and pepper to taste, and spoon

over fish steaks; set aside.
2. For salsa, put tomatoes, bell pepper, red onion, orange juice, basil, vinegar, sugar, salt and pepper to taste in medium bowl and stir. Spoon into serving bowl and chill until needed.
3. Heat lightly-oiled, ridged cast iron grill pan or skillet over high heat. Place fish steaks on grill pan or in skillet and fry, basting from time to time with oil mixture, until fish just flakes easily, 2 to 3 minutes on each side.
4. Place fish steaks on warm serving plates and grind black pepper over. Garnish with orange wedges and serve with salsa.

SERVES 4**Horoscopes****AVATAR VENUS****ARIES****MARCH 21-APRIL 20**

A trustworthy person has remarkable news. A disturbance can produce a warning. You'll want to escape from a weird dilemma.

**TAURUS****APRIL 21-MAY 21**

Reorganize a sluggish system right away. A threat will jog somebody's memory. You can get ahead by leaving a sad place.

**GEMINI****MAY 22-JUNE 21**

An amiable manner influences a realist. Don't count your blessings in public. You shouldn't push optimism to a cynical person.

**CANCER****JUNE 22-JULY 22**

A prosperous guy needs medical attention. Shabbiness will not be acceptable to a lady. Don't be a fool when crossing a street.

**CAPRICORN****DEC 22-JAN 20**

A lenient person will be receptive. A disturbing tempest threatens to interfere with funds. It's wiser not to complain about hostility.

**LEO****JULY 23-AUG 23**

Check your documents carefully. A magnificent man takes the other side in a conflict. Difficulties arise when you are too aggressive.

**AQUARIUS****JAN 21-FEB 18**

Never smirk when someone is discussing their ego. Some mighty odd events will make you flinch. Don't defend your spending with a whiner.

**VIRGO****AUG 24-SEPT 22**

Time passes slowly while awaiting a disclosure. A decent man gives a warning about unreliability. An alarmist rouses the neighbourhood.

**PISCES****FEB 19-MARCH 20**

An ill friend will discuss his personal agony. Your lack of concern is the point of a story. Keep your side of a bargain.

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